



# Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



TUESDAY — 2 AUG 2022

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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	08/01 More catching Covid second time around
SOURCE	<a href="https://news.yahoo.com/more-people-catching-coronavirus-second-120005892.html">https://news.yahoo.com/more-people-catching-coronavirus-second-120005892.html</a>
GIST	Emerging evidence suggests that catching the coronavirus a second time can heighten long-term health risks, a worrisome development as the circulation of increasingly contagious Omicron subvariants leads to greater numbers of Californians being reinfectd.

Earlier in the pandemic, it was assumed that getting infected afforded some degree of lasting protection, for perhaps a few months.

As the coronavirus mutates, though, that's no longer a given. And each individual infection carries the risk not only for acute illness but the potential to develop [long COVID](#).

"The additive risk is really not trivial, not insignificant. It's really substantial," said Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, clinical epidemiologist at Washington University in St. Louis and chief of research and development at the Veterans Affairs St. Louis Healthcare System.

According to a preprint [study](#) examining U.S. veterans, of which Al-Aly was the lead author, getting infected twice or more "contributes to additional risks of all-cause mortality, hospitalization and adverse health outcomes" in various organ systems, and can additionally worsen risk for diabetes, fatigue and mental health disorders.

"Reinfection absolutely adds risk," Al-Aly said. The study suggested that, compared with those infected only once, individuals who caught the coronavirus a second time were at 2½ times greater risk of developing heart or lung disease and blood clotting issues. Subsequent infections also were associated with a higher risk of potentially serious health problems, as well as death from COVID-19.

It's possible that a repeat coronavirus infection will leave someone just fine, which is what happens to most people, Al-Aly said. "But you might be one of the unlucky ones and ... get some really serious health problem with an infection."

Los Angeles County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer recently cited Al-Aly's preprint study as rationale for wearing masks in indoor public settings to avoid reinfection.

"They also saw that those with repeat infections had a higher risk of gastrointestinal, kidney, mental health, musculoskeletal and neurologic disorders, as well as diabetes," Ferrer said of the study. "Moreover, the risk of developing a long-term health problem increased further with each reinfection. The risk of having long-term health conditions was three times higher for those infected compared to those who were uninfected."

Older viruses, such as those that cause measles and chickenpox, are quite stable — meaning that the vaccinations are highly effective and surviving either illness typically confers lifelong immunity.

[Not so with the coronavirus](#), which has mutated wildly since the pandemic began. Someone who got infected with the variant that dominated California in late 2020, for instance, was vulnerable to catching the [Delta variant](#) the following summer. And those who survived Delta faced the risk of catching the later [Omicron variant](#).

But the reinfection landscape has been upended even further as California has been walloped with a family of increasingly transmissible [Omicron subvariants](#). The most recent of those, BA.5, has shown particular proficiency for reinfection — with the ability to target even those who survived an earlier Omicron case mere weeks before.

"This concept of building immunity, it really only works if you're encountering the same beast again and again and again," Al-Aly said. But in the world of COVID-19, BA.5 is actually a ["very different beast"](#) than earlier variants.

It's possible that the acute phase of a second bout of COVID-19 could be milder than the first. But a subsequent attack can still leave more extensive cumulative damage to the body than if there had been only one infection.

Think of coronavirus infections like earthquake sequences: It's possible an aftershock could be less severe than the first temblor but cumulatively could add more damage. And just because your home is still standing after one quake doesn't mean you shouldn't explore ways to make it seismically safer.

"Part of the reason why things, for many people, feel like they're not so bad right now is because we are being very aggressive in countering the virus with vaccines, with treatments," Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House COVID-19 response coordinator, said [during a healthcare summit](#) hosted by the Hill. "If we took our foot off the pedal, we're going to see this virus come back in a way that's much more dangerous. So we've got to stay on that front footing and continue fighting this thing."

As it relates specifically to long COVID — a condition in which [symptoms can persist](#) months or even years after an initial infection — getting vaccinated and boosted probably reduces risk, but studies differ as to the degree of protection.

"I think having some preexisting immunity — whether it's natural or from a vaccine — appears to reduce your risk of long COVID, but it's still there. It's not zero," said Dr. Steven Deeks, a professor of medicine at UC San Francisco and principal investigator of the Long-term Impact of Infection With Novel Coronavirus, [or LIINC](#), study.

Another [report](#), observing triple-vaccinated Italian healthcare workers who weren't hospitalized for COVID-19, found that two or three doses of vaccine were associated with a lower prevalence of long COVID.

A separate report suggested that even adults who had received a booster dose still have to consider the risk of long COVID. A British [report](#) said that, during the initial Omicron wave, about 1 in every 25 triple-vaccinated adults self-reported having long COVID three to four months after their first infection.

Still, some clinicians say that [long COVID sufferers](#) tend to be either unvaccinated or missing their boosters.

"The number of patients I'm seeing who were vaccinated and boosted who are coming in with long COVID is very low," said Dr. Nisha Viswanathan, director of the [UCLA Health Long COVID Program](#).

Long COVID also doesn't prevent you from becoming infected with the coronavirus again. Viswanathan said she's had patients who have seen their long COVID symptoms improve, then get sickened with another bout of COVID-19, and then see long COVID signs return.

The best way to prevent long COVID is to not get COVID-19. Many officials and experts cite non-pharmaceutical interventions such as masking as key tools, since vaccinations reduce, but do not entirely eliminate, the risk.

"[Masking](#) is not a terrible thing to ask of people, especially in probably the places that are the most crowded, and the places that maybe are the highest risk of transmission," Viswanathan said. Taking activities outside is also safer than being unmasked indoors.

Some of Viswanathan's patients have downplayed the risk of COVID-19, commenting how it's become [a mild illness](#), and adding they [don't see the point](#) of taking precautions. But, she said, better knowledge about long COVID and its disabling effects would help people understand the importance of masking and getting vaccinated and boosted.

A UCLA [study](#) published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine, of which Viswanathan was a co-author, found that of 1,038 patients with symptomatic COVID-19 between April 2020 and February 2021, nearly 30% developed long COVID. The most common symptoms were fatigue and shortness of breath among hospitalized patients.

	<p>While many are weary of COVID-19 preventive measures after nearly two and a half years, they remain important, said Dr. Anne Foster, vice president and chief clinical strategy officer for the University of California Health system.</p> <p>The burden of long COVID following this wave is unknown. The official case tallies are probably vast undercounts, given that so many at-home tests are being used, and that could suggest that the burden of long COVID in subsequent months will be hard to predict, Foster said.</p> <p>"I know everyone has moved on and people are going back to the way things were, and I sort of get it," Deeks said. "But people do need to be aware that there is this additional risk that's not going away and they might adjust their lives accordingly.</p> <p>"But everyone's going to figure this out on their own."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Living paycheck to paycheck: 61%</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/01/as-inflation-surges-more-americans-are-living-paycheck-to-paycheck.html">https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/01/as-inflation-surges-more-americans-are-living-paycheck-to-paycheck.html</a>
GIST	<p>Inflation has been causing economic hardship for workers across all income levels.</p> <p>As of June, 61% of Americans — roughly 157 million adults — lived paycheck to paycheck, according to a new <a href="#">LendingClub report</a>. That's up from 58% who reported living paycheck to paycheck in May. A year ago, the number of adults who felt stretched too thin was 55%.</p> <p>Even top earners have been struggling to make ends meet, the report found. Of those earning \$200,000 or more, 36% reported living paycheck to paycheck, a jump from the previous month.</p> <p>Another recent survey, from consulting firm Willis Towers Watson, estimated <a href="#">36% of those earning \$100,000 or more</a> said they were living paycheck to paycheck.</p> <p><b>Inflation has been an ongoing problem</b></p> <p>Although average hourly earnings are up 5.1% from a year ago, prices have been rising even faster, especially for groceries and — <a href="#">until quite recently</a> — gasoline, so paychecks <a href="#">can't stretch as far</a>.</p> <p>The Consumer Price Index, which measures the average change in prices for consumer goods and services, <a href="#">jumped a higher-than-expected 9.1% in June</a>, the fastest pace since 1981.</p> <p>Another key inflation gauge, the Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index, which measures the price change in goods and services consumed by all households, also <a href="#">jumped 6.8%</a>, the biggest 12-month move since 1982.</p> <p>Taken together, this data shows Americans are shelling out more to cover their monthly expenses, making it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. As a result, they're <a href="#">dipping into their cash reserves</a> and <a href="#">nearly half</a> are falling deeper in debt.</p> <p>Among all consumers, average savings dropped to \$10,757 in June from \$11,274 in May, LendingClub also found.</p> <p>Those struggling to afford their day-to-day lifestyle tend to rely more on credit cards and carry a higher monthly balance, making them financially vulnerable, the survey said.</p> <p>For its part, <a href="#">the Federal Reserve</a> hiked <a href="#">its target federal funds rate</a> by <a href="#">0.75 percentage point</a> a second consecutive time in an effort to calm <a href="#">runaway inflation</a>.</p> <p>The central bank has <a href="#">indicated even more increases are coming</a> until inflation shows clear signs of a pullback.</p>

HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Home prices cooled at record pace</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/01/home-prices-cooled-at-record-pace-in-june-according-to-housing-data-firm.html">https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/01/home-prices-cooled-at-record-pace-in-june-according-to-housing-data-firm.html</a>
GIST	<p>Rising mortgage rates and inflation in the wider economy caused housing demand to drop sharply in June, forcing home prices to cool down.</p> <p>Home prices are still higher than they were a year ago, but the gains slowed at the fastest pace on record in June, according to Black Knight, a mortgage software, data and analytics firm that began tracking this metric in the early 1970s. The annual rate of price appreciation fell two percentage points from 19.3% to 17.3%.</p> <p>Price gains are still strong because of an imbalance between supply and demand. The housing market has had a severe shortage for years. Strong demand during the coronavirus pandemic exacerbated it.</p> <p>Even when home prices crashed dramatically during the recession of 2007-09, the strongest single-month slowdown was 1.19 percentage points. Prices are not expected to fall nationally, given a stronger overall housing market, but higher mortgage rates are certainly taking their toll.</p> <p>The average rate on the 30-year fixed mortgage crossed above 6% in June, according to Mortgage News Daily. It has since dropped back into the lower 5% range, but that is still significantly higher than the 3% range rates were in at the start of this year.</p> <p>“The slowdown was broad-based among the top 50 markets at the metro level, with some areas experiencing even more pronounced cooling,” said Ben Graboske, president of Black Knight Data &amp; Analytics. “In fact, 25% of major U.S. markets saw growth slow by three percentage points in June, with four decelerating by four or more points in that month alone.”</p> <p>Still, while this was the sharpest cooling on record nationally, the market would have to see six more months of this kind of deceleration for price growth to return to long-run averages, according to Graboske. He calculates that it takes about five months for interest rate impacts to be fully reflected in home prices.</p> <p>Markets seeing the sharpest drops are those that previously had the highest prices in the nation. Average home values in San Jose, California, have fallen 5.1% in the last two months, the biggest drop of any of the top markets. That chopped \$75,000 off the price.</p> <p>In Seattle, prices are down 3.8% in the past two months, or a \$30,000 reduction. San Francisco, San Diego and Denver round out the top five markets with the biggest price reductions.</p> <p>The cooling in prices coincides with a sharp jump in the supply of homes for sale, up 22% over the last two months, according to Black Knight. Inventory is still, however, 54% lower than 2017-19 levels.</p> <p>“With a national shortage of more than 700,000 listings, it would take more than a year of such record increases for inventory levels to fully normalize,” said Graboske.</p> <p>Price drops will not affect the average homeowner as much as they did during the Great Recession, because homeowners today have considerably more equity. Tight underwriting and several years of strong price appreciation caused home equity levels to hit record highs.</p> <p>Despite that, the strong demand in the market recently could present a problem for some. About 10% of mortgaged properties were purchased in the last year, so price drops could cause some borrowers to edge much lower in their equity positions.</p>
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HEADLINE	08/02 Russia court: Azov Regiment terror group
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-08-02/russias-supreme-court-designates-ukraines-azov-regiment-a-terrorist-group">https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-08-02/russias-supreme-court-designates-ukraines-azov-regiment-a-terrorist-group</a>
GIST	<p>(Reuters) - Russia's supreme court on Tuesday designated Ukraine's Azov Regiment as a terrorist group, a Reuters correspondent reported.</p> <p>The Azov Regiment, which has far-right and ultranationalist roots, has been one of the most prominent Ukrainian military formations fighting against Russia in eastern Ukraine.</p> <p>Russia has regularly cited Azov in support of its assertion that Ukraine is controlled by "fascists".</p>
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HEADLINE	08/01 Germany firing up old coal plants for energy
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/01/germany-coal-energy-climate/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/01/germany-coal-energy-climate/</a>
GIST	<p>BEXBACH, Germany — The last coal pits around Bexbach closed a decade ago, leaving the power plant puffing plumes of pollutants as a relic of a dying regional industry.</p> <p>But now plant equipment is being repaired, contractors have come out of retirement, and manager Michael Lux is faced with a novel prospect: expanding the head count.</p> <p>“It’s a good feeling to be hiring,” he said, as he sat down to discuss plans to transition Bexbach, in the southwestern German state of Saarland, from “reserve” status back to full capacity. By winter, Lux expects to be burning a minimum of 100,000 metric tons of coal a month, in what some in the industry have dubbed a “spring” for Germany’s coal-fired power plants.</p> <p>It’s part of a pan-European dash to ditch Russian natural gas and escape President Vladimir Putin’s energy chokehold. While the war in Ukraine has simultaneously turbocharged the European Union’s race to renewables, fossil fuels still provide the quickest fix.</p> <p>France, Italy, Austria and the Netherlands have all announced plans to reactivate old coal power plants. But nowhere are the plans as extensive as in Germany, which is allowing 21 coal plants to restart or work past planned closing dates for the next two winters.</p> <p>That means a scramble for an industry that has been in its death throes in Germany. The country will have to import more coal from producers such as Australia and South Africa, even as those countries face pressure to cut back on coal-burning at home. And some experts warn the coal revival may make it harder for Germany to meet its climate goals.</p> <p>Horst Haefner gestured toward the stacks of coal in Bexbach’s storage yard: “Everyone wants to get rid of it, but they can’t do without it.”</p> <p>Haefner, 70, agreed to come out of retirement to work at Bexbach, checking plant machinery he last inspected back in 2004. It beats puttering around in the garden, he said, as other workers took a break in the shade.</p> <p>With temperatures hitting 91 degrees Fahrenheit, the day was so unusually hot for the region that the local beer garden had closed early for a “heat day.” It was a reminder of why countries have pledged to cut their carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels such as coal — and what’s at stake if they don’t.</p> <p><b>More coal, more emissions</b></p> <p>As Putin puts a <a href="#">squeeze on natural gas flows</a> to Europe — in what E.U. officials claim is retaliation for their support of Ukraine — Germany is <a href="#">trying to conserve energy</a>. It is also urgently seeking replacement sources of power. And it has few options.</p>

Ramping up renewables takes time. New liquid natural gas terminals are not yet finished. The government is considering [keeping the last three nuclear power plants online](#) beyond their planned end-of-year close date, but those account for a relatively small portion of the country's power generation.

The German government, which includes Greens as part of its coalition, has described the coal revival as a painful but necessary move — and assures it will be temporary.

Germany has simultaneously committed to a new target of 80 percent of power from renewable sources by 2030 — double the current contribution. It has begun to ease the permitting process for windmills and to invigorate a renewables rollout that many analysts say stagnated under former chancellor Angela Merkel. This push, the government maintains, will help the country stick to its climate goals and end the use of coal by 2030.

“If it was happening in a vacuum and we didn't have all this other legislation paired, then I'd be worried,” said Ysanne Choksey, a policy adviser for fossil fuel transition at E3G, a climate think tank.

But some experts voice concern about the short-term increase in emissions for Germany — and about whether it will be harder for the country to meet that 2030 target: cutting emissions by at least 65 percent of 1990 levels.

To get there, emissions in the power sector need to be reduced “substantially and as soon as possible,” said Simon Müller, Germany director of Agora Energiewende, a climate-focused nonprofit.

Yet Agora estimates that the fossil fuel plants that have been revived or allowed to stay open will add between 20 million and 30 million tons of greenhouse gases annually, equivalent to about 4 percent of Germany's total emissions.

Whether Germany will overshoot its [budget of 257 million tons](#) of carbon emissions for the power sector this year remains uncertain, Müller said.

“What is certain,” he said, “is that only a massive rollout of renewable energies and grid expansion will break our dependence on fossil energy imports and put us on track to meet Germany's climate target for 2030.”

In Germany last year, in part because of low winds and the already rising price of natural gas, hard coal and lignite accounted for 28 percent of electricity production — contributing to a rise of a 4.5 percent in overall emissions over the previous year.

To be sure, it's not just Germany that is off track. Despite global commitments to reduced emissions, last year was a [record year for coal globally](#). As the world emerged from the pandemic and demand for power surged, more coal was burned for electricity generation than at any other time in history. This year is poised to break records again.

Claudia Kemfert, head of the energy and environment department at the German Institute for Economic Research, said even with a government that has put climate policy at the forefront, red tape that has held back the country's renewables industry has not been sufficiently stripped away.

“We will not meet climate goals in the short term,” Kemfert said.

Leaning more on coal is now a “necessary step,” she said. “We are paying the price of 10 years of failed energy policy.”

#### **What it takes to resurrect a coal plant**

It remains unclear how many of the coal plants that are now allowed to fire up fully will elect to do so this winter. Energy companies will be weighing the cost of necessary investments against potential profits. On

Monday, the Mehrum plant in Lower Saxony was the [first to move out of reserve status](#), according to the Federal Network Agency.

Managers at Bexbach say their 40-year-old plant is aiming to return to full-time service, along with its sister unit, Weiher, about 14 miles west.

“The responsibility is fully understood,” Lux said.

Just five years ago, power company Steag tried to shut these plants down, deeming them unprofitable as cheap gas flowed from Russia. The German government mandated they be put into “grid reserve” — so they could be called on when needed to supplement imbalances in the energy grid, with running costs paid by the government.

Bexbach burned for only 319 hours last year.

Ramping up again brings challenges. In addition to getting the plants up to full working order, managers must find qualified staff and get in supplies.

Bexbach was built to burn local coal, but the area’s last hard coal mine closed in 2012. Before the war in Ukraine, Russia had been supplying much of the coal imports used at German plants. Yet with an E.U. embargo on Russian coal coming into force in August, energy companies have had to look elsewhere: to South Africa, Australia and Colombia’s Cerrejón mine, also [known as “the Monster”](#) and notorious for its poor environmental and safety record.

To get to an inland plant like Bexbach, that coal has to be hauled hundreds of miles by land or by train from the ports of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp. And contraction in the industry has resulted in bottlenecks, with coal stocks at European ports piled up to a three-year high.

“The whole market has expected the downturn of coal consumption: the ports, the rail operators, the barging operators,” said Stephan Riezler, head of trading at Steag.

For other plants that receive coal by barge, there’s an additional problem of low water levels on the Rhine River, a logistics artery for German industry, with boats unable to fully load.

The government has now given priority to coal cargo on its railway lines, in an attempt to expedite deliveries — which one transport alliance has warned could have a knock-on effect for public transportation.

As it ramps up, the industry is pushing for longer-term guarantees, which the country’s Green Economy Ministry is unlikely to offer.

Alex Bethe, chairman of Germany’s Association of Coal Importers, said there’s a need for a “signal” from the government that “we have a five-year perspective in order to justify the hiring of personnel, doing investments and improvements.”

Under the [new coal law](#), plants like Bexbach that plan to get back in the market have been asked to fill their stocks to 180,000 tons of coal, which energy firms argue is a financial risk.

“So we are saying to the government: This is a wonderful idea, we want to save the country in the winter, but what we need is a credit line,” said Riezler, as he sat down with plant managers to discuss what was needed to reenter the market.

Still, even with rising coal prices, there’s money to be made, and managers say it’s just a matter of ironing out the details.

“We’ll do everything in our power to bring all of those millions of tons to the power plants,” Bethe said.



HEADLINE	<b>08/02 US agency warns of Afghanistan famine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/02/afghanistan-women-food-taliban-inspector-general/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/02/afghanistan-women-food-taliban-inspector-general/</a>
GIST	<p>KABUL — Millions of Afghans are expected to experience “extreme levels of hunger” in the coming months, while foreign aid agencies here face a significant decrease in food and emergency provisions because of shortfalls in funding, according to a report released Monday night by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.</p> <p>The watchdog agency said Afghanistan’s humanitarian crisis remains “dire,” with 18.9 million people facing “potentially life-threatening” hunger and up to 6 million facing “near-famine conditions.” But it said that emergency aid is likely to fall sharply through November, reaching only 8 percent of the population, because insufficient foreign funds have been donated to relief agencies including UNICEF and the World Food Program.</p> <p>The report, which comes nearly a year after U.S. forces withdrew from Afghanistan, also warned that the plight of Afghan women is continuing to worsen since Taliban extremists returned to power last August. The quarterly inspector general’s assessment, which has previously focused on fraud, waste and other problems with U.S. military and civilian involvement in Afghanistan, this time singled out Taliban suppression of women as a major concern.</p> <p>This warning echoed new alarms being raised over deteriorating conditions for Afghan women by other international agencies. Last month, the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan sharply condemned an array of Taliban policies that it said “make women effectively invisible.”</p> <p>In another report last week, the rights group Amnesty International said Afghan women and girls are enduring a “suffocating” crackdown by Taliban authorities, restricting their rights to free movement and education and leading to rising rates of forced marriage of girls.</p> <p>The inspector general’s report opened with a lengthy section headlined “Taliban Repression of Women and Girls Grows.” It criticized Taliban officials for backtracking on pledges to restore female freedoms — in particular the regime’s “abrupt” reversal in March of its announced plan to reopen girls’ shuttered high schools.</p> <p>That turnaround, which some analysts have attributed to internal disagreements among Taliban leaders, further dashed international hopes for serious change in Taliban attitudes. Since then, the report noted, Taliban authorities have issued numerous rules that further restrict women’s rights to engage in activities outside their homes.</p> <p>In May, a decree from the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice — a once-feared entity during the first period of Taliban rule — said that women should wear a burqa or cover their faces when in public, and that it would be “best” for them not to leave home at all. Another decree banned women from long-distance road and air travel unless chaperoned by a male relative. A third required female TV presenters to cover their faces on air.</p> <p>So far, these rules have not been regularly enforced by physical punishments, as was common during the previous Taliban era in the late 1990s. Taliban officials have described them as “guidance” rather than mandatory orders. They have also repeatedly stated that they will ensure all rights for women according to Islamic sharia law, and that foreigners do not have the right to intervene in Afghan religious and social traditions.</p> <p>The issues of continued humanitarian suffering and restrictions on women’s rights in Afghanistan are closely intertwined. The impoverished country of 39 million has suffered a devastating economic decline since August of last year, when Taliban forces took power, prompting the withdrawal of most foreign aid and the U.S. seizure of more than \$9 billion in Afghan assets.</p>

Legal exemptions have allowed some funds to reach foreign aid groups, but they have met only a small fraction of the need. According to the inspector general's report, Afghans will face a nearly 60 percent increase in food insecurity this fall compared with the same period last year. It said that the United Nations is seeking to raise \$4.4 billion for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, and that nearly half has been pledged, but only \$601 million has been confirmed.

Wahidullah Amani, a spokesman for the World Food Program in Kabul, said the agency needs to raise \$900 million to keep operating for the next six months, before winter snows block the roads to poor rural provinces. The group holds frequent distributions of wheat, beans and cooking oil in Kabul and other cities, where long lines form early and last all day.

A major demand of foreign donors and governments is that the Taliban, which is desperately seeking international recognition and restored aid, must prove it will respect women's rights, as well as human rights in general. While some colleges are open to women under strict gender segregation, and girls may study up to sixth grade, the continued lack of access to jobs, education and public activities has been especially frustrating to Afghan women who studied, worked and participated in public life during two decades of civilian rule.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, speaking Thursday in Washington at the launch of a consultative program with Afghan women's groups, said the Taliban had "reversed a great deal of the openness and progress" made in recent years, stifling civil society and the press. "Perhaps most notably, they failed to respect the human rights of women and girls," he said. "Instead, under the Taliban, women and girls have largely been erased from public life."

Blinken said the Taliban's decision in March to ban girls from secondary schools — even as some were "literally walking to school and others were already sitting at their desks" — was a "reversal of commitments they made to the Afghan people and the world. ... It's a terrible, terrible waste." He said U.S. officials will "continue to urge the Taliban to reverse their decision."

In Kabul and other cities, female activists have tried to fight back, holding numerous protests against new restrictions, but some rallies have been suppressed by police and none have made concrete gains. On the streets of the capital, women are able to shop with only their heads covered and there is no sign of armed Taliban morality enforcers. But in rural areas, rights groups have reported Taliban officials carrying out severe punishments — including lashings and stonings — for girls or women who elope, flee abusive homes, defy forced marriages or have illicit sex.

The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, in a June report, described incidents of "cruel and degrading" Taliban punishments for moral offenses in rural provinces, similar to those meted out in the past. In one case, a man and a woman were reportedly stoned to death in Badakhshan province for having an extramarital affair.

Another blow to hopes for women's rights came in June, when Taliban officials held a consultation on national issues with 4,500 religious clerics and tribal leaders. They did not allow women to participate, saying they would be represented by male delegates. The inspector general's report said that while some participants supported girls returning to school, there was no formal discussion or recommendation on the subject.

Deborah Lyons, the U.N. special representative to Afghanistan until June, made a departing plea to the international community to pursue an "engagement strategy" with the Taliban to persuade its authorities that a system that excludes women and minorities "will not endure." But the inspector general's report said recent Taliban actions hold out little chance that an international carrot-and-stick effort will have any success.

"Sadly," the report concluded, "neither increasing international isolation, nor worsening economic and health crises, nor the growing desperation of ordinary Afghans, seem to have deterred the Taliban from reinstating many of their repressive policies of the 1990s."

HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Monkeypox testing has a bottleneck</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/theres-a-monkeypox-testing-bottleneck/">https://www.wired.com/story/theres-a-monkeypox-testing-bottleneck/</a>
GIST	<p><b>WHEN THE FIRST</b> case of <a href="#">monkeypox</a> was confirmed in the United States, the country's public health laboratories had the ability to run <a href="#">6,000 tests per week</a>. That was way more capacity than needed—until monkeypox started <a href="#">spreading faster</a> than public health officials had anticipated. There are now approximately 5,000 <a href="#">confirmed cases in the US</a>.</p> <p>For patients, testing is crucial, because a positive result is needed for accessing TPOXX, an antiviral medication that is <a href="#">being used off-label to treat monkeypox</a>. “Having a test result is a self-advocacy tool,” says Keletso Makofane, an HIV epidemiologist at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University. “If you don't have a test result, you don't have evidence of your condition.”</p> <p>Testing has since expanded to around 80,000 tests per week, after five large commercial laboratories <a href="#">partnered with the federal government</a> to boost the nation's testing efforts. But while the ability to run more tests has improved, there are still barriers that prevent people from accessing them. And although states are required to report cases of <a href="#">certain diseases</a>, monkeypox isn't one of them. That makes it difficult for public health officials to gauge the true size of the outbreak and who the disease is infecting, in order to break the chains of transmission.</p> <p>“One piece of information that we're missing is how many tests are actually being run and what the percent positivity is,” says Caitlin Rivers, an infectious disease epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. “If we had those metrics, we would have a better understanding of how much of our existing capacity is being used and whether it's reaching enough people to be able to say confidently that we're finding most cases.”</p> <p>Testing was initially slow to ramp up, in part because public health officials didn't expect monkeypox to spread as quickly as it has. “We initially anticipated that demand would be low, because monkeypox transmission in humans tends to be very limited,” says William Morice, president of the Mayo Clinic Laboratories and chair of the board of directors for the American Clinical Laboratory Association. Despite its name, monkeypox is primarily carried by rodents, including tree squirrels and rats. Previously, the biggest outbreak in the US was in 2003, when 47 people in six states—Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin—got the disease after having contact with infected pet prairie dogs that were housed near imported small mammals from Ghana.</p> <p>Unlike with Covid-19, which was a completely new disease, the US already had a test for orthopoxviruses—the family of viruses that includes monkeypox and smallpox. That meant the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention didn't have to start developing a new test from scratch, something that hampered testing in the early days of the Covid pandemic. (A <a href="#">design flaw</a> in the kits that the CDC mailed out to public health labs in February 2020 meant that early Covid-19 tests had a high failure rate.)</p> <p>But while a monkeypox test already existed, it required lab workers to do each step by hand, Morice says. <a href="#">Federal guidelines</a> say testing should be done only by swabbing the lesions of a person suspected to have the virus. These lesions look like pimples or blisters and can appear on the face, hands, feet, around the genitals or anus, or inside the mouth or rectum. Then the swabbed samples undergo a PCR—or polymerase chain reaction—test, which involves extracting genetic material and amplifying it to look for the presence of monkeypox virus's DNA. When done manually, it means multiple steps of adding fluid, mixing reagents together and isolating the DNA.</p> <p>That makes testing slow going. Commercial labs like the Mayo Clinic have been working to automate the process. Until recently, the clinic was able to process only 20 to 30 tests a day using the manual protocol, but soon it will be able to run several hundred tests a day, says Morice.</p>

This kind of test raises some other issues too. “The current tests force you to swab a lesion. For people with internal lesions, that might not be possible, or it’s very painful,” Makofane says.

A monkeypox test can't be given until a person has visible symptoms—and it can take several days for a rash to appear. Some people may have very subtle, or very few, lesions. While it’s not clear if the disease can spread before the blisters form, Rivers says it would be better to catch an infection earlier on, so that people can access treatment and [vaccines as soon as possible](#). For the best chance of preventing the onset of the disease, the CDC says, the vaccine should be given within four days from the date of exposure.

Like Covid-19 testing in the early days of the pandemic, monkeypox tests must be ordered by a physician. Morice says many doctors might not know to test for monkeypox because it’s such a new disease in the US, or they may not consider referring patients who are not in what they think of as at-risk populations. While most cases have been in men who have sex with men, not all are. For example, health officials in Indiana have reported that around [20 percent of the state's cases](#) have been in women, and [two infections](#) in the US have been identified in children.

Financial constraints, stigmatization, and lack of insurance or transportation to testing sites can also be barriers that keep some people with symptoms from seeking testing.

The US Food and Drug Administration says monkeypox should be diagnosed only by swabbing lesions, but a [study published in June](#) by researchers in Spain points to other possible ways of testing for the virus. They detected monkeypox viral DNA in both saliva and semen samples from 12 patients with a confirmed infection.

The idea is already being pursued by Flow Health, a California company that has been offering Covid-19 testing. The company is working on a monkeypox test that requires a person to spit into a plastic tube. Then, lab workers perform a PCR test, extracting and amplifying viral DNA from the sample.

CEO Alex Meshkin says that a saliva-based test could have benefits; for example, it could enable screening of pre-symptomatic cases, something that’s been critical for Covid-19 testing. It could also be done at a pharmacy, mass testing site, or even at home, avoiding the possible embarrassment of seeing a medical provider. “Relying on a lesion swab that is painful and invasive and can only really be done in a clinic will inherently have a fairly low demand because of the roadblocks of traditional health care,” Meshkin says.

But in a safety communication issued July 15, the [FDA warned](#) that testing samples that are not taken from a lesion could lead to false results. The agency noted that it is not aware of clinical data supporting the use of other sample types, such as blood or saliva.

Rivers says it should be a research priority to develop other modalities, so that testing can reach as many people as possible: "It's important to determine whether testing oral fluids, for example, is just as accurate as swabbing of lesions."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Virus hunters preparing for next pandemic</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://time.com/6202044/preparing-for-next-pandemic-virus-hunters/">https://time.com/6202044/preparing-for-next-pandemic-virus-hunters/</a>
GIST	<p>Nobody saw SARS-CoV-2 coming. In the early days of the pandemic, researchers were scrambling to collect samples from people who had mysteriously developed fevers, coughs, and breathing problems. Pretty soon, they realized that the disease-causing culprit was a new virus humans hadn’t seen before.</p> <p>And the world, lacking a coordinated global response, was unprepared. Some countries acted quickly to develop tests for the novel coronavirus, while others with fewer resources were left behind. With a virus oblivious to national borders, and with travel between countries and continents more common than it had been in previous centuries when past plagues had hit, these inequities meant everyone was vulnerable. The solution? Shutting the world down, closing borders, and asking people to hide from the virus by staying indoors.</p>

It soon became clear that the world would only weather this pandemic by working together, and that governments alone couldn't necessarily save us. Surveillance into the microbial world was necessary in order to predict coming outbreaks—and, barring that, then at least detect them more quickly after they hit. Some in the private sector saw an opportunity. In 2021, Abbott—the global health care company known for its diagnostic tests—decided to start the Abbott Pandemic Defense Coalition (APDC), the first convergence of public health and academic experts led by a private company. It now includes 15 members based in 12 countries. Its mission: to detect new pathogens that threaten to wreak havoc on the world, share their discoveries by making their findings available publicly, and contain them before it's too late.

The experiment is just beginning, but it's already paying off. APDC partners were among the first in the world to spot several dangerous mutations of the COVID-19 virus—including Omicron—just as they were emerging, which put countries on high alert and allowed them to prepare in advance by increasing testing, doubling down on vaccine programs, and advising infected people to isolate. It was a big change from being blindsided by the original version of the virus.

Now, the virus hunters are watching out not only for new versions of SARS-CoV-2, but they're also continuing their search for other dangerous disease-causing bugs. In June, as monkeypox began infecting people around the world, the network monitored genetic sequences of the virus that showed it came from the less virulent of two monkeypox strains endemic in Africa, and that existing vaccines would continue to be effective. Using that data, Abbott has developed a monkeypox PCR test (for research purposes only) that coalition members are using to track the virus in their respective countries so they can hopefully contain spread of the disease and detect any changes in the viral genome as soon as they appear. APDC also monitors a host of other emerging infectious diseases, including hepatitis, Zika, dengue, meningitis, and yellow fever. These are predicted to become more widespread; as humans continue to encroach on previously wild geographical regions, we're more likely to come into contact with pathogens that can pose a threat to public health. Climate change also raises the risk of infectious diseases as species that carry viruses or bacteria spread to broader areas.

COVID-19 has turned out to be an ideal proving ground for this type of coalition. Partner labs in the coalition analyze the genetic sequences of thousands of virus samples collected from COVID-19 patients in their region. The virus is constantly evolving, and by comparing sequences to those from existing samples, scientists can immediately distinguish any noteworthy differences and monitor them more closely. These changes—especially if they are appearing in not just one part of the world but in multiple regions simultaneously—could represent worrying mutations that make it easier for the virus to spread or cause more serious disease.

If one of the partners detects a pattern, they immediately share it with all partners to determine if others are seeing the same trend. If they are, then Abbott and the members join forces to ensure the current tests are still able to detect the new strain. Should the tests fail, then Abbott scientists would get to work revising it. “We are able to build tools like tests and assays that can be distributed to our partners and potentially manufacture them at scale if needed,” says Gavin Cloherty, who leads APDC. (Fortunately, current tests continue to pick up the latest variants of the virus.) The coalition also shares any concerning discoveries with public-health officials and government leaders around the world, including the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as on global public databases. Knowing what might be coming can help health authorities deploy limited COVID-19 resources like testing and treatments, as well as additional personnel, to where they are needed the most.

The coalition may seem self-serving for a company like Abbott, which has a long history of providing diagnostic tests for pathogens—including its popular BinaxNOW COVID-19 rapid at-home test kits. Being the first to hear of any changes in SARS-CoV-2 samples around the world gives Abbott's scientists a running start at modifying diagnostics, should the need arise. Finding more variants and more viruses means more tests—which makes good business sense.

But the public-health partners benefit, too. It's an expensive operation to run: Abbott wholly funds the coalition, providing its partners with state-of-the-art equipment, training, and lab supplies to collect

samples and conduct genetic sequencing. Abbott also shares its scientific and manufacturing expertise, since it has been surveilling viruses globally for the last 30 years, from the start of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. That ongoing global surveillance program is the predecessor to APDC; it monitors known pathogens—instead of new or emerging ones—for mutations that might affect diagnostic tests and treatments. APDC was created to concentrate on diseases that couldn't be explained by existing microbes. For the members, joining the coalition also links otherwise isolated public health labs around the world—from places including Africa, Central America, and Asia—into a tight-knit community that can quickly disseminate information about any new pathogens they discover, or aberrations they find in the genetic sequences of viruses.

“Although it is a private company, and diagnostic kits are to be sold, what I see is an effort to bring down scientific borders and increase communication across the globe,” says Esper Kallas, professor of infectious and parasitic diseases at the University of Sao Paulo, which is a coalition partner.

Such worldwide collaborations aren't entirely new, and most have been initiated by philanthropic groups. The Rockefeller Foundation's Pandemic Prevention Institute, for example, which recently partnered with the Pasteur Institute, is a philanthropy-led group of 33 members that act as sentinels for emerging infectious diseases that could become public health threats.

COVID-19 forced these types of partnerships between public-health facilities, foundations, and private companies, which have the financial resources to develop new tests or treatments. Such collaborations are increasingly essential for mounting a quick and efficient response against a fast-moving virus. Perhaps the best example of the power of such alliances was the U.S.'s ability to develop, test, manufacture, and distribute millions of COVID-19 vaccines in under a year. The feat never would have been possible if the U.S. government had not funded pharmaceutical companies' costs in developing and manufacturing these vaccines; doing so helped not only the U.S., but also the world benefit from the revolutionary mRNA shots that had never before been used against a virus.

The only way to be truly prepared for the next pandemic is to make such coalitions the norm. Sustaining them between public health threats is among the best ways to defend against the next big one. “Public-private partnerships are essential for [disease] surveillance, testing, treatments, you name it,” says Dr. Eric Topol, director and founder of the Scripps Research Translational Institute. “We do better if those groups are working together.”

So far, APDC members have contributed to identifying three major SARS-CoV-2 variants. In June and July 2020, as the coalition was being formed, hospitals in South Africa noticed a rapid uptick in patients admitted with COVID-19 that seemed out of proportion to previous trends. A research team at the Center for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) at Stellenbosch University in South Africa—which was already collaborating with Abbott on tracking HIV—analyzed samples from patients at 200 clinics when they found the mutation that the WHO later designated as Beta. “We found the exact same variant in samples from clinics that were hundreds of kilometers away, so we knew it was widespread and that we potentially had a new variant,” says Tulio de Oliveira, who leads CERI. Data from the South African hospitals suggested that younger people were the most affected, and that they were getting sicker than people who had been infected with the earlier version of the virus.

De Oliveira immediately alerted global health authorities to the new variant, which allowed public health experts to prepare for a potential wave of patients who might need more intensive hospital care. Back in Chicago at Abbott's headquarters, scientists quickly determined that, based on the variant sequences, the company's existing PCR and recently authorized at-home rapid tests for SARS-CoV-2 could still detect the new variant.

Brazilian researchers issued a similar alarm several months later. Researchers at the University of Sao Paulo had worked with Oxford scientists during Brazil's 2015 Zika outbreak to develop a mobile, compact machine to process virus samples; later using it to scan COVID-19 samples, they noticed unusual sequences coming from northern Brazil in the Amazon Basin, centered around the city of Manaus. The changes to the viral genome turned out to signal a new variant, Gamma, that would go on to cause



significant disease and death in the area. But as tragic as Gamma's local effects were, early detection likely prevented it from causing even more disease and death elsewhere in the country and world, says Kallas, whose team helped to identify Gamma. "What would have happened if Gamma would not have been discovered until it reached a big city such as Sao Paulo, of 20 million people?" he says. "We would have been caught completely off guard." Luckily, coalition scientists confirmed that existing rapid tests also worked to detect Gamma, just as they had for Beta.

Then came the most stunning shape-shifting the virus had undergone yet: Omicron. A lab technician in South Africa was conducting routine genetic sequencing of random SARS-CoV-2 samples and noticed that the virus was missing one of three hallmark proteins that all of the previous variants had. The technician tipped off de Oliveira's group, which conducted a more detailed analysis showing that the virus had picked up a shocking 30 or so mutations—most of them in the spike protein, the region that vaccine and drug makers targeted. In the span of six hours, hundreds of samples from more than 100 clinics from different cities in South Africa arrived at de Oliveira's labs in Stellenbosch. Sequencing those samples revealed the same pattern of mutations. Within 36 hours, de Oliveira notified the health minister and president of South Africa, along with the WHO, that a new version of the virus was brewing.

Within days of confirming the findings, de Oliveira also shared them with coalition partners around the world—in the U.S., India, Thailand, Brazil, and Columbia, as well as throughout the continent of Africa—to give countries a head start in looking for the genetic changes signaling the Omicron variant, just as they had done with Beta and Gamma.

The collaboration quickly put lots of different eyes on the same urgent problem. "Each of us brings a different skill set," says Dr. Sunil Solomon, assistant professor of medicine in infectious diseases at Johns Hopkins and director of YRG Care in Chennai, India, one of the coalition partners. Solomon and others at the center have extensive experience researching HIV, for example, and now community-based surveillance and data analysis of SARS-CoV-2. "Sometimes you can get siloed, and people can go down rabbit holes thinking what they are working on is important, so they forget what the bigger picture is. The coalition is focused on translating what all of us find for clinical relevance to make sure that whatever we are doing is tailored toward improving the public's health."

Coalitions like APDC could serve as a model for standing up more extensive networks of virus hunters. "Our efforts are intended to augment and add to the overall global efforts, with the philosophy of networking different networks together," says Cloherty. "Viruses move very fast. We also need to be moving very fast by working with our partners." Cloherty says he shares the APDC's findings with teams at the WHO, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in order to better coordinate programs and work together efficiently.

Gates is a big proponent of this type of virus-hunting squad. In his 2022 book, *How to Prevent the Next Pandemic*, he describes the ideal global infectious disease monitoring system, which he dubs GERM, for Global Epidemic Response and Mobilization. The idea is to maintain a network of scientists whose sole mission is to scan the world's databases of infectious disease cases and raise alerts if new, unexplained infections are bubbling up anywhere in the world. GERM would also be responsible for sending SWAT teams of experts to help countries where outbreaks are occurring contain and control the spread of disease.

The WHO has a similar system to track emerging public-health threats through its Global Outbreak and Alert Response Network (GOARN), which provides emergency assistance to countries confronting infectious disease outbreaks. But GOARN's responsibilities extend beyond such outbreaks to include crises in food safety, natural and manmade disasters, and the release of chemical toxins. The CDC also conducts surveillance for emerging pathogens, and maintains teams abroad as well as mobile groups ready to fly anywhere around the world to provide assistance if countries ask for it.

But historically, the enthusiasm for maintaining these types of systems ramps up during outbreaks—such as during Ebola in the 2010s, and now COVID-19—only to die down when the threat retreats, along with funding. More resources and personnel are deployed during urgent needs, but they aren't maintained between crises, which experts say is crucial to a strong surveillance system. Gates calculates that it would

cost the world about \$1 billion to support 3,000 full-time “virus hunters” in a sustained war against invisible marauders—less than one-thousandth what nations currently spend on defense, to protect themselves against potential wars with one another. The funding, Gates says, shouldn’t come from solely philanthropists or foundations like his, but from governments, which need to commit to and invest in preparing for public-health threats in the same way they shore their defenses against other threats, and from private companies, which can provide much-needed experience and resources in the form of tests and agile manufacturing capabilities if new tests or therapies are required, to make the process more efficient.

Such investment is becoming more critical with every year. Coronaviruses alone have caused significant outbreaks several times over recent decades—and that’s just one family of viruses. As the world learned with COVID-19, by the time a pandemic hits, it’s already too late to start creating relationships and building networks among different countries to efficiently share real-time information about a dynamic disease and ever-evolving virus. And the network’s potential is only as extensive as its reach; the more partners linking together, the more likely it is that the world will benefit from any alarming findings, such as an emerging infectious disease, that a partner discovers. COVID-19 also made clear that monitoring for changes in existing pathogens and keeping a lookout for new ones isn’t a job for governments and global health groups alone. Industry can play important roles in controlling health outbreaks, but there often aren’t financial incentives for businesses to do so. “I don’t see enough companies who have made billions of dollars using some of that great profit to do things that are not in their self interest,” says Topol. Instead, the world is left with a patchwork system of public-health sentinels that’s riddled with enough holes for pathogens like coronaviruses to slip through undetected, giving them enough time to spread before diagnostic tests, vaccines, or treatments can be developed. “It’s out of sight, out of mind,” says Sumit Chanda, professor of immunology and microbiology at Scripps Research, of the existing preparedness strategy.

Even COVID-19 vaccine development in the U.S. is currently stalled following the initial success of their development and manufacturing. With more transmissible variants of SARS-CoV-2 circulating, and with low uptake of the shots in many parts of the world, new vaccine designs—including nasal shots that might provide stronger and more durable protection against respiratory viruses like SARS-CoV-2—haven’t moved beyond the research and early testing stages because of a lack of funding. Pharmaceutical companies could be enticed to invest in testing and developing innovative solutions like these if the government or philanthropic groups matched the funds industry partners put into development, Topol says, so no one group is left subsidizing the entire cost. But so far, those investments aren’t forthcoming.

Systemic changes—like sustained funding—are also needed in order to be prepared for the next pandemic. Until we make those types of commitments, the world’s ability to see viruses coming will continue to be limited. But some experts, like Kallas, are hopeful that COVID-19 proves to governments how critical collaborations between countries can be, especially when it comes to identifying new potential health threats.

“Some people call the Amazon Brazil a hot zone, a place where diversity in flora and fauna are so [rich] that the chances of a bug jumping from one species into humans is high,” he says. A country like Brazil, then, would benefit greatly from having more virus hunters. Gamma, after all, won’t be the last virus to emerge from there. “We need a cultural change in mindset,” he says, “one that sees the value to society in investing in science to decrease suffering and make us a better society.”

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HEADLINE	08/01 OPA clears SPD officers of extortion
SOURCE	<a href="https://publicola.com/2022/08/01/harrell-shakes-up-top-staff-police-accountability-office-clears-officers-accused-of-extortion/">https://publicola.com/2022/08/01/harrell-shakes-up-top-staff-police-accountability-office-clears-officers-accused-of-extortion/</a>
GIST	The Office of Police Accountability <a href="#">declined to sustain</a> , or uphold, any of ten separate allegations in a <a href="#">2017 case</a> in which two police officers accused another officer of running a “mini-mafia” to prevent new companies from entering the market for off-duty work. The two officers were the founders of called Cops for Hire, since rebranded as Blucadia, that also connects businesses with off-duty officers.

The OPA complaint, which attracted significant attention at the time, accused officers working for Seattle's Finest, a security company started by a retired SPD officer, of colluding to increase the pay of off-duty officers by intimidating and extorting the companies that contract with the firm, including the owners of Columbia Tower downtown. The OPA wrapped up its investigation in October 2018 but did not release the summary of its findings until last week.

*The investigation found that the officer expressed his frustration by commenting that he would put a person who worked at the company in a "carotid choke hold." A separate, [related case](#) described an interview with the FBI in which the officer said he was "just joking around and was trying to get a rise out of his audience."*

Police officers can make [thousands of dollars](#) in additional income by taking off-duty jobs in security or directing traffic through companies like Seattle's Finest and Seattle Security, which is affiliated with the Seattle Police Officers Guild. In some cases, police are paid for a certain number of hours even if they work less—four hours, for example, for two hours' actual work.

According to the investigation, the officer with Seattle's Finest, identified by the [Seattle Times](#) as MacGregor Gordon, said one of the company's bargaining tactics was to name a high price for their services, and then—if a building owner balked—withhold their work as parking garage flaggers and force the owners to bear the consequences until they finally gave up and paid the price Seattle's Finest demanded.

Investigators said they were "hindered" in investigating the claims of extortion because the business owners "refused to discuss the matter unless OPA could guarantee full confidentiality

The investigation also found that Gordon expressed his "frustration with garage management's attempts to modify his contract" by commenting that he would put a person who worked at the company in a "carotid choke hold." A separate, [related case](#) described an interview with the FBI in which Gordon said he was "just joking around and was trying to get a rise out of his audience" with his inflammatory comments

Former police chief Kathleen O'Toole referred the case to the FBI, which decided not to prosecute. We have a call out to OPA for information about why it waited until now to release the summary of its investigation.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Back to school, back to outbreaks
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.axios.com/2022/08/02/back-to-school-back-to-outbreaks">https://www.axios.com/2022/08/02/back-to-school-back-to-outbreaks</a>
GIST	<p>As students around the country start a new school year, providers say childhood immunization rates are too low, in some places, to prevent outbreaks of diseases like measles.</p> <p><b>The big picture:</b> After COVID kept kids isolated from classmates and discouraged routine medical visits, experts fear the student population will have lower immunity and be behind on routine vaccines.</p> <p><b>Why it matters:</b> Schools and public health officials have to convince parents to get their kids caught up on recommended childhood vaccinations or risk the very real threat of the return of illnesses once mostly eliminated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• While COVID showed how outbreaks can engulf school-aged children, the pandemic response revealed the drawbacks of school closures to kids' development, making future mitigation efforts open to political blowback.</li></ul> <p><b>What we're hearing:</b> Global vaccination rates <a href="#">plummeted</a> during the pandemic and have yet to rebound, leaving more kids and teens vulnerable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "If there's an outbreak anywhere in the world, people in the U.S. will be at-risk," Dean Blumberg, chief of infectious disease at the University of California Davis Children's Hospital, told Axios.</li></ul>

- During the 2020-2021 school year, vaccination coverage decreased by one percentage point for U.S. kindergarteners compared to the prior school year, [the CDC found](#), and infant [vaccination rates](#) also dropped between 2019 to 2020.

**Driving the news:** We've already seen out-of-season outbreaks that experts say could have been prevented through regular vaccination.

- Worldwide measles cases [increased 79%](#) for the first two months of 2022 compared to 2021.
- New York health officials confirmed the first case of polio in the United States in almost a decade, in Rockland County, where the current [polio vaccination rate](#) among two-year-olds is 60.5%, compared to statewide average of 79.1%, per the New York health department.
- In March, a Los Angeles school banquet triggered [a flu outbreak](#) so severe that 41% of attendees reported symptoms and administrators closed the school for in-person attendance.

**Flashback:** Pandemic restrictions and virtual education reduced kids' risk of contracting measles, mumps, rubella and other communicable diseases. And masking, testing and contact tracing tended to keep COVID and other illnesses from spreading through classrooms.

- But the arrival of the more infectious Omicron subvariant underscored how quickly things can change — especially since schools can be breeding grounds for community spread.
- "I think we'll see an increased number of (COVID) cases that come out of schools, and we'll have schools where whole classrooms will test positive which we didn't always see in the past," Sterling Ransone, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians, told Axios.
- Students also likely will bring COVID home to vulnerable family members.
- COVID vaccination rates lag in teenagers and children, and [a recent Kaiser Family Foundation survey](#) found more than four in 10 parents will not vaccinate their children under 5 years old against the virus.

**Reality check:** Politics is fanning anti-vaccine sentiment in the U.S. and around the world, writes Peter Hotez, a vaccine researcher at the Baylor College of Medicine in [Nature](#).

- "Many conservative elected leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives actively promote this health freedom anti-vaccine agenda, as do several U.S. senators, sitting governors and federal judges," Hotez writes. "Far-right extremist groups such as the Proud Boys march at anti-vaccine rallies."
- That sentiment, which has led to at least 200,000 excess COVID deaths in the U.S. that could've been prevented by vaccines, has been amplified in countries across the world, he wrote.

**Look ahead:** Administrators overseeing routine non-COVID childhood immunizations now will have to overcome more vaccine hesitancy and contend with state laws that allow parents to claim exemptions on religious and moral grounds.

- In 2019, [the CDC reported](#) 1,282 measles cases in the United States, the highest number recorded since 1992.
- To protect against measles, 95% or higher herd immunity is necessary, and if vaccination rates dip, especially in local communities or schools, outbreaks are possible.
- Vaccination coverage against measles for kindergarteners nationwide in the 2020-2021 school year was at 93.9%, [according to a CDC analysis](#).
- "Measles outbreaks that occurred pre-pandemic occurred because of travel in people who were under-immunized," Blumberg said.

**Bottom line:** Pediatricians and family physicians are urging families to remember to vaccinate their children ahead of the school year to keep them safe from outbreaks.

- "There are multiple reasons to vaccinate; it's not just preventing death but also allowing kids to stay in school and thrive and be social and all those things that are vital to a child's development," Gretchen LaSalle, family physician and AAFP Vaccine Science Fellow, told Axios.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-160-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-160-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The United Nations chief has warned that nuclear annihilation is just one miscalculation away.</b> At the opening of a key nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) conference in New York, António Guterres warned that the world faced “a nuclear danger not seen since the height of the cold war.” “Humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation,” he said citing the war in <a href="#">Ukraine</a> as a significant factor.</li> <li>• <b>On Monday Russian President Vladimir Putin said there could be “no winners” in a nuclear war and it should “never be unleashed”</b> in a letter sent to attendees of the NPT conference. In February, Putin pointedly referred to Russia’s nuclear arsenal and warned outside powers that any attempt to interfere would “lead you to such consequences that you have never encountered in your history”. Days later, he ordered Russia’s nuclear forces to be put on high alert.</li> <li>• <b>The US will send \$550m in a new tranche of weapons to Ukraine</b>, including ammunition for increasingly important rocket launchers and artillery guns. Ukraine received a batch of four more US-made high mobility artillery rocket systems (Himars), Ukraine’s defence minister said on Monday.</li> <li>• <b>The US has accused Russia of using Ukraine’s largest nuclear power plant as a “nuclear shield”.</b> US secretary of state Antony Blinken said Washington was “deeply concerned” that Moscow was now using the plant as a military base and firing on Ukrainian forces from around it and called Russia’s actions around the plant “the height of irresponsibility”.</li> <li>• <b>A ship carrying Ukrainian grain <a href="#">left the port of Odesa</a> for the first time since the start of the Russian invasion</b> on Monday under an internationally brokered deal to unblock Ukraine’s agricultural exports and ease a growing global food crisis. The Sierra Leone-flagged ship Razoni was carrying 26,000 tons of corn and destined for Lebanon. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the shipment as “the first positive signal that there is a chance to stop the development of a world food crisis” while the Kremlin called the departure “very positive” news.</li> <li>• <b>The daily gas production of Russia’s Gazprom <a href="#">dropped in July to its lowest level since 2008</a></b>, figures suggest, amid fears that Moscow could cause an energy crisis in Europe by shutting off supply. The state-owned energy firm pumped 774m cubic metres a day last month – 14% less than in June – according to analysis by Bloomberg of data released on Monday. Overall total output for the year was 262.4bn cubic metres, a 12% fall compared with the same period last year.</li> <li>• <b>Food inflation has soared across much of the developing world since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine</b> and has trapped several richer countries in a cycle of rising prices, a report by the World Bank has found. The organisation said the war would hit many countries with an <a href="#">increase in food bills worth more than 1% of their annual national income</a> (GDP), while others would fail to contain the impact and be plunged into a full-blown debt crisis.</li> <li>• <b>France will donate a mobile DNA lab to Kyiv authorities in a bid to ensure war crimes by Russian forces in Ukraine do not go unpunished</b>, President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday.</li> <li>• <b>Spanish businesses, restaurants, museums and public transport will be required to adhere to strict temperature requirements under emergency measures</b> the government announced on Monday to save energy. The plan establishes a minimum temperature of 27C (80F) in summer and a maximum of 19C (66F) in winter.</li> <li>• <b>The Russian economy has been deeply damaged by sanctions and the exit of international business since the country invaded Ukraine</b>, according to a new report by Yale University business experts and economists. Largely unpublished data shows that much of its domestic economic activity has stalled since the invasion. “Not only have sanctions and the business retreat worked, they have thoroughly crippled the Russian economy at every level,” the 118-page report read. “Russian domestic production has come to a complete standstill with no capacity to replace lost businesses, products and talent.”</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	08/01 World Bank: food prices soar
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/01/food-prices-soar-across-world-amid-ukraine-crisis-world-bank-finds">https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/01/food-prices-soar-across-world-amid-ukraine-crisis-world-bank-finds</a>



## GIST

Food inflation has soared across much of the developing world since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has trapped several richer countries in a cycle of rising prices, a report by the [World Bank](#) has found.

The Washington-based development organisation said the war in eastern Europe would hit many countries with an increase in food bills worth more than 1% of their annual national income (GDP), while others would fail to contain the impact and be plunged into a full-blown debt crisis.

Lebanon was the worst-hit, the World Bank said, after [a food grain store explosion in Beirut two years ago](#) crippled the Mediterranean country's ability to hold and distribute maize and wheat to its 6.8 million people.

Food inflation there hit 332% in the year to June, ahead of Zimbabwe's 255% increase and Venezuela's 155%. Turkey was fourth with a food inflation rate of 94%.

The gap between Lebanon's food inflation and general inflation – which produces a “real food inflation” figure – was lower, at 122%, but remained the worst rate in the world, mainly because spiralling energy costs pushed Lebanon's general inflation rate above 150%.

A deal last month between Ukraine and Russia, [brokered by Turkey and the United Nations](#), to allow container ships carrying cereals to leave Ukrainian ports helped bring commodity prices down.

World Bank figures showed a dramatic reversal of cereal prices on global markets since June and a steep fall in the price of other agricultural products to lows close to those seen last year.

On Monday, the Sierra Leone-flagged cargo ship Razoni [left the Ukrainian port of Odesa](#) carrying more than 26,000 tons of corn destined for Lebanon.

Rice has increased in cost over recent months, but from a low level during the pandemic that bucked the trend of historically high price levels for wheat, barley and maize.

Last week Bangladesh [called on the International Monetary Fund \(IMF\) for financial support](#) after an increase in the cost of imported food and energy threatened to undermine the south Asian countries finances.

Bangladesh is understood to need about \$4.5bn (£3.6bn), though only \$1bn-\$1.5bn is available under current IMF arrangements.

Sri Lanka has already asked for a bailout from the Washington-based fund after running out of cash to buy vital imports, while a deal with Pakistan for a \$6bn IMF loan was revived in June.

Low food prices have underpinned global growth in recent decades, offsetting the high cost to developing countries of servicing their debts and imports of fuel.

However, the World Bank said the shock increase in food prices over recent months was affecting most economies, [including those with relatively high incomes](#).

“The share of high-income countries with high inflation has also increased sharply, with about 78.6% experiencing high food price inflation.

“The most-affected countries are in Africa, North America, Latin America, South Asia, Europe, and central Asia,” it said.

It also warned that large producers of grain, including France, Spain and Italy, would need to adjust to rising temperatures and uncertain weather patterns driven by the climate crisis to maintain high levels of production.



HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Firefighters find 2 dead Calif. wildfire path</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/01/california-wildfire-mckinney-fire-bodies-found">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/01/california-wildfire-mckinney-fire-bodies-found</a>
GIST	<p>Two people were found dead in the path of the a wildfire raging across northern <a href="#">California</a>, as firefighters raced to contain the blaze amid searing temperatures and impending thunderstorms.</p> <p>The McKinney fire in northern California, which has grown into California's largest this year, is one of several large fires burning across the US west and one of several concurrent extreme weather events battering the region.</p> <p>The fire exploded in size over the weekend in a largely unpopulated area in the Klamath national forest, just south of the Oregon state line. Flames had scorched more than 55,000 acres by Monday morning, according to officials.</p> <p>Despite a massive firefighting effort, the blaze was 0% contained. Crews on the ground worked to keep the fire from moving east into the town of Yreka, home to 7,500 people. Thousands of people in the area had been told to evacuate.</p> <p>The two victims were found inside a charred vehicle stopped in a residential driveway, the local sheriff's office said. The victims were not immediately identified.</p> <p>A second, smaller fire burned just to the west. It was sparked by dry lightning Saturday and threatened the tiny town of Seiad. A third fire, which was on the south-west end of the McKinney blaze, prompted evacuation orders for about 500 houses Sunday, said Courtney Kreider, a spokesperson with the Siskiyou county sheriff's office.</p> <p>Meanwhile, fires were raging in Montana, Idaho and Nebraska, flash floods chewed up roads in Death Valley national park and set residents in Nevada and northern Arizona on high alert, and a punishing heatwave in the Pacific north-west set records in Seattle and Portland.</p> <p>The fire in northwest Montana was sparked in grasslands near the town of Elmo and had grown to about 17 sq miles on Sunday after advancing into forest. In Idaho, the Moose fire in the Salmon-Challis national forest has burned on more than 75 sq miles in timbered land near the town of Salmon. It was 21% contained by Sunday.</p> <p>Elsewhere, a wildfire dubbed the Carter Canyon fire has forced evacuations and destroyed some homes in the Nebraska Panhandle. Officials said the blaze south of the town of Gering began as two separate fires that merged over the weekend. Tinder-dry conditions, rough terrain and winds of 20mph have helped the fire grow to more than 25 square miles. The blaze is around 33% contained and no injuries were immediately reported.</p> <p>Roads in and out of Death Valley national park were closed after mud and debris flowed on to lanes this weekend. On Monday, the National Weather Service issued flash flood warnings for counties on both sides of the California-Nevada border.</p> <p>Amid the various emergencies, vice-president Kamala Harris prepared to announce \$1b to address extreme heat and flooding, and to help communities adapt infrastructure to increasingly volatile weather wrought by the climate crisis.</p> <p>"We know that the impacts of the climate crisis are here and that we must invest in building resilience to protect our communities, infrastructure, and economy," the White House said.</p> <p>The investment is part of a broader effort by Joe Biden's National Climate Task Force "to build resilience to climate impacts, including extreme heat, wildfires, drought, flooding, coastal threats, financial risks, and more," the White House said.</p>

	<p>Earlier this month, Biden unveiled an extreme heat plan, but stopped short of declaring a climate emergency as climate campaigners has urged.</p> <p>Across the western US, the need for disaster relief funds and disaster-resilient infrastructure have been acute in communities reeling from the concurrent threats of floods, drought, wildfire and heat.</p> <p>Scientists say the climate crisis has made the western US warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.</p> <p>In northern California, smoke from the McKinney fire cast an eerie, orange-brown hue in one neighborhood, where a brick chimney stood surrounded by rubble and scorched vehicles on Sunday. Flames torched trees along State Route 96 and raced through hillsides in sight of homes.</p> <p>Valerie Linfoot’s son, a fire dispatcher, called to tell her their family home of three decades in Klamath River had burned. Linfoot said her husband had worked as a US Forest Service firefighter for years and the family had done everything they could to prepare their house for a wildfire, including installing a metal roof and trimming trees and tall grasses around the property.</p> <p>“It was as safe as we could make it, and it was just so dry and so hot and the fire was going so fast,” Linfoot told the Bay Area News Group. She said her neighbors had also lost homes.</p> <p>“It’s a beautiful place. And from what I’ve seen, it’s just decimated. It’s absolutely destroyed,” she told the news group.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/01 Health agencies ‘tired’, ‘overworked’</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/monkeypox-us-virus-vaccine-health-response">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/monkeypox-us-virus-vaccine-health-response</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>A “slow and bureaucratic” response that has seen monkeypox spread rapidly across the US – with more than a thousand cases in New York City alone – reveals just how badly battered local health agencies have been since the Covid pandemic, advocates have said.</p> <p>Once a rare African virus, monkeypox has taken hold amid the ragged patchwork of city, county, state and federal agencies that make up the US public health infrastructure.</p> <p>“Unfortunately, delayed actions mean monkeypox has spread within the gay community and among other men who have sex with men,” said David Harvey, executive director of the National Coalition of STD Directors.</p> <p>“This outbreak has grown to be a public health crisis in America. We are still in a very chaotic situation at the state and local level with an organized response.”</p> <p>As an explanation for the chaos, many observers point to how Covid reshaped the landscape for public health officials. Once considered neutral arbiters of information, many health officials were politically attacked following unpopular mask and vaccination policies.</p> <p>Across the country, public health officials were harassed, threatened, fired or simply felt burned out and quit. The situation was not helped as resources that had once been devoted to things like tracking communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, or running routine vaccination clinics, were suddenly diverted to Covid-19.</p> <p>Sexual health clinics have struggled, too, as testing and staff resources were devoted to Covid-19, hurting organizations that had already suffered years of underfunding.</p>

The result has been worse health outcomes for many basic public health services: routine vaccinations for children have fallen; overdose deaths have exploded; and the US has posted a record-high rate of sexually transmitted infections for the sixth year running.

As monkeypox has spread, the Biden administration has attempted to respond by releasing about 1.1m vaccines and ramping up testing capacity, which has grown from about 6,000 to 80,000 per week. The World Health Organization declared monkeypox a global health emergency this week, and the US could follow suit by declaring monkeypox a national public health emergency, which would release more resources to local agencies.

“The system is tired, it’s overworked, it’s underpaid, it’s understaffed,” said Lori Tremmel Freeman, chief executive of the National Association of County and City Health Officials. “All the same issues that plagued us during the pandemic are still with us and haven’t gone away.

“What’s added to it, with monkeypox and beyond, is that we also have a workforce that has documented mental health trauma after the pandemic.”

Public health advocates want the president and Congress to allocate more funds to respond to the outbreak, and for sexual health clinics in general. Public facilities have proven to be the first line of defense with monkeypox, even as federal prevention funding for such work has fallen 41% since 2003.

“Local sexual health providers are being asked to respond to monkeypox on top of an already out-of-control STI epidemic in America,” said Harvey. “We are at the breaking point: we need the Biden administration and Congress to immediately fund STI public health programs and clinical services.”

Although anyone can catch monkeypox, the virus has primarily affected men who have sex with men. Sexual health clinics have often been frontline responders to the outbreak because of how monkeypox can present its symptoms, with lesions around the genitals and the anus – though sex is just one way monkeypox can spread. Any close contact with an infected person can spread the disease, including touching, kissing and cuddling, as well as sharing glasses, utensils, bedding and towels.

Although the virus, which belongs to the same family as smallpox, is rarely fatal, symptoms can be excruciating, with painful lesions and flu-like symptoms, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Up to 10% of people are reportedly requiring hospitalization, , and many are showing up in emergency departments because of severe pain, said Freeman.

The situation is exacerbated because testing for monkeypox is limited. There is no home test and results can take days. There is, however, a vaccine, for which people at heightened risk may be eligible; they may also qualify for treatment with the drug tecovirimat, sold as TPOXX. But the barriers are significant, obtaining it can be tricky, and tecovirimat – usually reserved for people with severe symptoms – must be requested by doctors from the government’s national strategic national stockpile, which involves significant paperwork.

Moreover, people without insurance probably lack access to both vaccine and drug, said Freeman; about 12.7% of the LGBTQ+ community lacks health insurance compared with 11.4% of the general population, according to an analysis by federal officials. Even if you do have insurance, there are hurdles baked into the US healthcare system, such as trying to navigate between urgent care clinics, primary care providers and state health departments.

Freeman recounted a story she about a local health department that asked its state for information about a monkeypox outbreak. The state replied to check with the CDC; the CDC then redirected local officials back to the state.

“There’s a lot of finger-pointing going on here,” she said. “We should have learned. We should know more now than we knew three years ago from our Covid response [about] what we need to do here.”

HEADLINE	08/01 Monkeypox patients: lack CDC guidance
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/monkeypox-patients-report-excruciating-pain-and-lack-of-guidance-as-u-s-cases-mount-11659432602?mod=hp_lead_pos10">https://www.wsj.com/articles/monkeypox-patients-report-excruciating-pain-and-lack-of-guidance-as-u-s-cases-mount-11659432602?mod=hp_lead_pos10</a>
GIST	<p>Taber Feltner, a research associate in Iowa City, Iowa, said he noticed some <a href="#">worrying symptoms</a> in mid-July, a few days after returning home from a trip to Chicago.</p> <p>A rash developed in his groin, which he initially brushed off as ingrown hairs. But within a few days, he developed a fever of over 103 degrees Fahrenheit and the rash transformed into painful, pus-filled lesions. “I’ve never been that sick in my life,” said Mr. Feltner.</p> <p>More than two months after monkeypox was detected in the U.S. as <a href="#">part of a global outbreak</a> mostly among men who have sex with men, transmission shows no sign of slowing. The U.S. has surpassed Spain as the country with the <a href="#">most known cases</a>. Federal officials are considering whether to declare monkeypox a public-health emergency.</p> <p>Patients said they are navigating the outbreak without sufficient guidance from physicians and public-health officials on how to treat the disease and prevent its spread. Mr. Feltner said he wasn’t able to get vaccinated before travel because Iowa gave priority to people who had been exposed to monkeypox. He said he was mocked by healthcare providers when he attempted to seek care and struggled to find adequate expert information about the disease. He said he has relied on social media and the anecdotal accounts of other patients to fill the gaps.</p> <p>“Trying to get questions answered was impossible,” said Mr. Feltner.</p> <p>Public-health experts and community advocates said the Biden administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were too slow at responding to the outbreak when it first emerged and continue to take insufficient action to stem the spread of the virus.</p> <p>“We’re not getting streamlined communication to communities. People are making things up as they go. That’s not the best public-health strategy,” said Jason Rosenberg, a member of ACT UP NY, an HIV/AIDS advocacy organization.</p> <p>The CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.</p> <p>To date, there have been more than 5,800 confirmed or suspected cases in the U.S., mostly among men who have sex with men, federal health officials said. Epidemiologists said the virus is exploiting close-knit social and sexual networks, but knowledge of <a href="#">how the virus is spreading</a> in this current outbreak remains incomplete.</p> <p>“We have to be very humble about what we know and what we don’t,” said Anne Rimoin, an epidemiologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, who spent two decades studying monkeypox in Africa, where the disease has long been endemic. “What we know is based on studies done in very different epidemiological and ecological contexts. We need to know much more about transmissibility.”</p> <p>The World Health Organization, which declared monkeypox a global health emergency, says monkeypox is most commonly spread through close contact with an infected person’s rash, lesions and bodily fluids. The virus can also spread via fabrics and other materials, and through prolonged exposure to an infected person’s saliva or mucus.</p> <p>Aerosol, also known as airborne, transmission of the virus hasn’t been considered to be of significant concern by public-health experts, but some early research <a href="#">suggests it could be possible</a> in certain conditions. Airborne transmission is defined as the dissemination of a virus through very small droplets which remain suspended in the air over long distances and time.</p>

Public-health experts recommended that people at risk for infection get vaccinated when possible, not share bedding or towels, wash hands often, and avoid intimate physical contact with someone with rashes or sores, or limit sexual partners altogether.

A person can spread monkeypox until all their lesions have scabbed and the scabs have fallen off, infectious-disease experts said. Public-health officials have advised potentially infectious people to remain quarantined for the duration of their illness. Monkeypox symptoms typically last two to four weeks, the CDC said.

Most monkeypox cases in the U.S. have been mild, though moderate and severe cases have been reported. A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine of more than 500 monkeypox patients in 16 countries found that 13% were hospitalized, mostly for pain.

It is hard to predict who will experience a severe case, said Peter Chin-Hong, a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, noting that patients in his care haven't been immunocompromised or very old. "The people who are hospitalized are very, very sick," he said.

Josh Watson of Chicago said he developed lesions on different parts of his body, including some in his throat that made it difficult to eat and drink. He was hospitalized and treated with the antiviral drug tecovirimat in mid-July. The drug, sold by New York-based Siga Technologies Inc. under the brand name TPOXX, has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of smallpox, a disease closely related to monkeypox.

Amid the outbreak, the FDA and CDC have approved expanded access of TPOXX to monkeypox patients, but healthcare providers said obtaining the drug has been burdensome. Until recently, it took providers several hours to complete extensive FDA and CDC paperwork and other requirements to get the drug to patients, said Cathy Creticos, medical director of infectious disease at Howard Brown Health, a nonprofit LGBTQ healthcare and social services provider in Chicago. The CDC simplified the protocol to obtain TPOXX late last month.

Twenty days after his first monkeypox symptoms appeared, Mr. Watson said he remained quarantined with a lesion on his foot and lingering fatigue.

"The risks of monkeypox have been severely downplayed," Mr. Watson said. "People need to know that the risk is greater, the symptoms are greater. What I'd heard is that you get a rash for a couple of weeks and then it'll go away, you won't die. But no one was talking about the pain, the difficulty urinating or having bowel movements."

Some patients with moderate to severe symptoms said their symptoms improved significantly after taking TPOXX. Healthcare providers said most monkeypox cases in the U.S. have resolved without medical intervention.

Mr. Feltner said it took many days before he was able to get access to testing and treatment for monkeypox.

He said a nursing assistant at an urgent-care clinic in Iowa City laughed at him when he suggested he had monkeypox. A doctor at the clinic diagnosed him with herpes and refused to test him for monkeypox, Mr. Feltner said. The doctor sent him home with Valtrex, an antiviral drug used to treat herpes.

The medication didn't work. "Things just got worse," said Mr. Feltner, who was eventually hospitalized and given TPOXX.

"Our healthcare system here is definitely not ready for this disease," Mr. Feltner said.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3581358/local-businesses-struggle-sdot-construction-delays-pile-up/">https://mynorthwest.com/3581358/local-businesses-struggle-sdot-construction-delays-pile-up/</a>
GIST	<p>Construction work began on the Tacoma Link service Sunday, July 31, with the light rail closing until 10 p.m. Friday, Sept. 16 in order to open its 2.4-mile extension next year, disrupting local businesses in the process.</p> <p>“I was told lies across the board. We were told this was a worthwhile project. It’s not,” Steven Salamone, owner of Salamone’s Pizza, said on the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH. “We were told that they would keep the closures to a minimum. That they would run through it as quickly as possible. This is an absolute miscarriage of justice.”</p> <p>The extension is set to have six new stations as free bus shuttles will replace Tacoma Link service for a few weeks this summer while crews connect the existing line with the <a href="#">Hilltop extension</a>.</p> <p>“They broke ground in front of my shop in summer of 2019. Fast forward three years, they’re still closing roads here all around my shop,” Salamone said. “They still got construction materials and construction vehicles strewn about alongside road signs, closures. They’re still digging up parts of the rail that they already installed, and then just chip it all out. And, you know, I can’t even imagine what the carbon footprint of this project is.”</p> <p>Salamone stated a dip in sales occurs immediately with each closure or construction project that his business has to work around.</p> <p>“The more trouble people have coming to patronize your business, the less people are going to come,” Salamone said.</p> <p>Last week, Mayor Bruce Harrell appointed Greg Spotts, a Harvard alum and the former Chief Sustainability Officer at the Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services, as the new director of Seattle’s Department of Transportation (SDOT).</p> <p>Despite the change in leadership, Salamone does not expect to see a difference in communication between the department and business owners.</p> <p>“There is no conversation, you will just shut up and pay. It’s really gross how they’ve done this, to be honest. In the old days, where I come from in New York, when we wanted to build a subway, we would issue bonds, and the bonds would be paid back to the investors with interest. But that assumes there is a payback,” Salamone said. “Unfortunately here, there will never be a payback. This thing will be an absolute boondoggle for the first entire existence, it will be subsidized, probably 100% by the taxpayer by force, to have to pay these taxes. This is just no way to run a city or state or anything.”</p> <p>Harrell called Spotts a “transformational leader” during a press conference last week, touting Spotts’ work in Los Angeles around transportation equity and the dedication to the basics of the transportation system, including potholes. Harrell also stated he wants his next director to “look at the data and be transparent.”</p> <p>“I’ve used more mass transit than any of these fools around here ever will,” Salamone said. “If they started today, they can never catch up to me. I used it all my life since I was a kid in New York City. And even when I was an adult, I opted to use the Metro North railroad as opposed to driving into Manhattan.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Explosion at Bulgaria weapons storage site</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/ukraine-russia-news-war">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/ukraine-russia-news-war</a>
GIST	A Bulgarian arms dealer who was targeted by <a href="#">a Russian sabotage and hit squad</a> with <a href="#">two near-fatal poisonings and explosions at his arms depots</a> has again fallen prey to mysterious misfortune: an unexplained blast at his Bulgarian weapons storage site.



The explosion early Sunday ripped through an arms warehouse owned by the dealer, Emilian Gebrev, in Karnobat, a town in southeastern Bulgaria.

Mr. Gebrev told Bulgarian media on Monday that the warehouse stored ammunition that had been ordered but not yet paid for by companies he declined to name. He said the cause of the blast was not known.

On Monday, Mr. Gebrev told the private television channel Nova TV that the security system at the ammunition depot had detected some motion before the blast and that a security guard at the site had gone to check the breach. The explosion erupted before the guard could reach the location, Mr. Gebrev said. Nobody was injured, according to officials.

“My storage facility has been damaged, I’m the victim,” he said in the television interview. “However, this is an attack against the state.”

The authorities have not had a chance to inspect footage from surveillance cameras due to safety concerns, he added.

Past [attacks on Mr. Gebrev](#) — which included poisonings from a substance resembling the Novichok nerve agent — and on his weapons stores have been blamed on Russian military intelligence agents seeking to punish him for his suspected role in providing weapons to Ukraine.

Mr. Gebrev long denied selling arms to Ukraine but, in an email to The New York Times last year, he acknowledged that his company had shipped military equipment to Ukraine after 2014, when Russia first invaded its neighbor, and that a depot blown up in the Czech Republic in 2014 was storing some of his weapons.

Weapons depots in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic have suffered a rash of explosions over the past decade for which authorities [have blamed a special unit](#) of Russia’s military intelligence service.

Last year the Czech Republic, furious over what it said were Moscow’s fingerprints on a series of mysterious 2014 explosions at Czech ammunition depots, expelled nearly 60 Russian diplomats. Bulgaria also expelled diplomats and said it suspected six Russian citizens in connection with blasts at four Bulgarian arms depots.

Bulgaria’s previously friendly relations with Russia, which is a critical energy supplier, have soured significantly since President Vladimir V. Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. Bulgaria has since expelled scores of Russian diplomats and offered to repair Ukrainian military equipment while Russia has cut off gas deliveries to the Balkan nation.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 In Kentucky rain complicates recovery</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/us/kentucky-flood-death-toll.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/us/kentucky-flood-death-toll.html</a>
GIST	<p>WHITESBURG, Ky. — One round of rainstorms after another blew through eastern Kentucky on Monday, deepening the misery of an already desperate region. Floodwaters again swallowed the roads that had recently reopened to allow emergency workers to scour the remote hills and valleys for survivors; creeks once again swelled into the streets of small towns where people had just begun the gloomy work of emptying houses of their waterlogged contents.</p> <p>Gov. Andy Beshear of Kentucky confirmed on Monday that the death toll from last week’s floods <a href="#">had risen to 37</a>, but warned that countless people were still missing. “There are hundreds of unaccounted for people, minimum,” he said at a news briefing. “We just don’t have a firm grasp on that. I wish we did. There are a lot of reasons why it’s nearly impossible. But I want to make sure that we’re not giving either false hope or false information.”</p>

The governor emphasized that responders were still in the search-and-rescue phase, but that the operation was exceedingly difficult because of impassable roads and washed-out bridges. In some remote parts of the mountains, there was not a reliable count of the population even before the floods, leaving the authorities dependent on word-of-mouth from residents and reports from family members.

“You just wonder how someone can rebuild from something like that,” said Sean Osborne, a contractor who was assessing the damage of a house in the debris-cluttered streets of Whitesburg on Monday. He described the twisted frames of mobile homes and the splintered trees he had come across as he drove through the area in recent days, evidence of how hard recovery is going to be.

The roads in and out of many of the hollows of eastern Kentucky are narrow and were crumbling even before the floods, barely maintained by cash-strapped local governments. Many mountain communities consist of a row of homes lining these roads, often with a creek running through the backyards. Last week’s catastrophic flooding, and the mudslides that followed, left some of these communities all but isolated from the outside world, doubly so given that cellphone service has been down in so many places.

The storms that came in Sunday night into Monday, running off already saturated soils, only made things worse.

“It rained all night,” said Gwen Johnson, who helps run a [community center and bakery](#) just off Coal Miners Highway in Letcher County. In the nearby town of Fleming-Neon, she said, “they had cleaned all kinds of debris out of the buildings and people’s homes, and a lot of it just washed down into the streets.”

Ms. Johnson and others had been cooking whatever people brought to the community center — corn, soup, canned pork — and delivering meals on four-wheelers to those who could not make it to the center in person. But it was so hard to get supplies, even drinkable water, that there was a limit to what they could do.

Even aside from the storms, there were deep concerns about the sweltering days ahead, given that around 11,000 customers were still without power and more than twice that number were without water. Another 44,000 were under a boil water advisory, the governor said on Monday morning.

Many people in the mountains rely on small water supply lines running down the creeks and hollows, and repairs to these lines could take weeks, said Greg Stumbo, a former state representative, who was unloading relief supplies at a recreation center in Knott County. “It’s going to be bad when it gets hot again,” he said. Houses were already baking in a sea of sticky mud, he said, and “you can’t hardly clean all that stuff up if you don’t have water and electricity.”

Cleaning was the herculean task that lay before the exhausted citizens of Whitesburg, a town of roughly 2,000 people that hugs the Kentucky River. On Monday afternoon, the hilly streets were lined by soggy mountains of carpets, air conditioning ducts, toys, couches and chairs. On the sidewalk in front of a church stood a pew, before a vast selection of books, including hymnals, prayer guides, a Quran and a copy of “The Joy of Trivia.”

“It’s watching people pick up everything they worked for their whole lives,” said Kristie Profitt. Ms. Profitt’s house on Highway 7 had been her grandmother’s, a place central to family history. Her family had started and run the post office in the tiny community of Isom and her grandmother’s father had the first motor truck in town.

Now, she was dreading going through the house, confirming what she feared was lost when water as high as her waist surged through: the oak bed that had been in the family for generations; the Bible that had belonged to her grandmother, who had died last November.

“It’s just hard to see the history having to be torn down,” she said, “and history being floated away and set out for trash.”

	<p>At the end of Main Street stood the 118-year-old house where Melissa Griffith has lived for about a dozen years. The river was just a few feet away, but she never knew it to have been a problem. Her church baptizes people in it, and she has seen people cross it on foot. During the worst flood she had heard about, in 1937, the water didn't climb high enough to reach the front step.</p> <p>This time it came rushing inside, and one could see evidence of the water's ferocious power. Her refrigerator had been carried across the kitchen, and the ceilings were stained with mud. But there were also signs of how strangely capricious nature could be: Her paper towel holder stayed exactly where she had left it, untouched.</p> <p>Ms. Griffith had lost almost everything, and her home was uninsured. But her attention was elsewhere. "My job is still to take care of others," she said. Ms. Griffith is a therapist, and she had been checking in with patients. Many of them had very little, she said, and now the trauma of the flood would combine with the trauma of poverty. "They're already struggling financially," she said. "And then you take away everything."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 US 20M monkeypox vaccine doses expire</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/monkeypox-vaccine-jynneos-us.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/monkeypox-vaccine-jynneos-us.html</a>
GIST	<p>Less than a decade ago, the United States had <a href="#">some 20 million doses of</a> a new smallpox vaccine — also effective against monkeypox — sitting in freezers in a national stockpile.</p> <p>Such vast quantities of the vaccine, known today as Jynneos, could have slowed the spread of monkeypox after it first emerged in the United States in mid-May. Instead, the supply, known as the Strategic National Stockpile, had only some 2,400 usable doses left at that point, enough to fully vaccinate just 1,200 people. The rest of the doses had expired.</p> <p>Now, some 10 weeks into the outbreak, many people at high risk who want to get vaccinated have been unable to find a dose and may not be able to find one for months.</p> <p>The chain of events that led the stockpile of a now-critical vaccine to dwindle to near nothing in the United States is only now emerging.</p> <p>At several points federal officials chose not to quickly replenish doses as they expired, instead pouring money into developing a freeze-dried version of the vaccine that would have substantially increased its three-year shelf life.</p> <p>As the wait for a freeze-dried vaccine to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration dragged on over the last decade, the United States purchased vast quantities of raw vaccine product, which has yet to be filled into vials.</p> <p>The raw, unfinished vaccine remains stored in large plastic bags outside Copenhagen, at the headquarters of the small Danish biotech company Bavarian Nordic, which developed Jynneos and remains its sole producer.</p> <p>For nearly 20 years, the United States government has helped fund the company's development of the vaccine, clinical trials and manufacturing process, at a cost that <a href="#">passed the \$1 billion mark by 2014</a> and is hurtling toward \$2 billion. Despite this, the United States now finds itself unable to procure enough doses to quickly launch a widespread vaccination campaign for those at highest risk: men who have sex with men, and in particular, those who have multiple partners.</p> <p>One reason for the reduction in the U.S. stockpile of Jynneos is that the federal officials overseeing it had not viewed monkeypox as much of a problem, or at least as their problem. They were focused on the most dangerous and deadly scenarios, such as a bioterror attack involving smallpox or anthrax.</p>

“We have to prepare against multiple threats with a limited budget,” said Dr. Gary Disbrow, the director of Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, or [BARDA](#), the federal agency that supported the development of Jynneos and other drugs and vaccines to protect against pandemics, bioterrorism and other hazards. “Our planning was for smallpox.”

Now, monkeypox has emerged as a serious public health threat. As of the end of July, more than 5,000 cases were reported in the United States, and there were nearly 1,300 in New York City.

“We were required to have vaccines for smallpox, based on a material threat determination that simply didn’t exist for monkeypox, specifically,” said a Health and Human Services spokeswoman in a statement. “Today, now that we’re in response mode of facing a public health threat, we’re working swiftly around the clock to accelerate the number of doses available.”

The limited supply of Jynneos available shows that a new approach to preparing for biological threats and pandemics is needed, said a former federal official, Dr. Ali S. Khan, who until 2014 ran the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention office that managed the stockpile. “I want people to know how poorly this went given the amount of money and resources put into it,” he said.

### **9/11 and Fears of a Bioterrorism Attack**

Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the subsequent [anthrax letter attacks](#), the United States government redoubled its efforts to prepare against future threats. One clear danger was smallpox, with a 30 percent fatality rate. Though the virus was declared eradicated in 1980, lab samples of it existed, and there had long been concern that [a foreign country](#) or terrorist group might weaponize it.

In the years since Sept. 11, the United States stockpiled well over 100 million doses of smallpox vaccines — versions of the vaccine that eradicated the virus. With names like Dryvax and ACAM2000, they use a live virus that replicates and can have dangerous side effects, including inflammation of the heart in about six recipients out of 1,000. One or two people of every million vaccinated are expected to die.

After 2001, the United States sought an effective smallpox vaccine with fewer side effects. In 2003 it began pumping millions of dollars into Bavarian Nordic, a small company with a promising new smallpox vaccine.

By 2013, Bavarian Nordic [had delivered 20 million doses](#) of its new smallpox vaccine to the [Strategic National Stockpile](#), according to the company’s annual report as well as U.S. documents.

The vaccine came in vials in liquid-frozen form, with a three-year shelf life.

The new vaccine, which back then went by the name Imvamune, not Jynneos, was never intended to replace the far larger stockpile of older generations of smallpox vaccines, but to be offered to [those at higher risk](#) of complications from the older vaccines and their family members, according [to a 2014 report](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. That included people with conditions ranging from eczema to H.I.V., and pregnant women and infants.

Some federal health officials were skeptical. Jynneos required two shots — not ideal in the event of a bioterror attack — rather than one.

But Bavarian Nordic executives told shareholders that the long-term U.S. plan was to stockpile enough of the Jynneos vaccine to vaccinate all 66 million eligible people in high-risk households.

In 2009, the company received a \$95 million contract from the United States to begin developing a freeze-dried formulation with a shelf life of five to 10 years.

As the 20 million Jynneos doses began to expire, and with the free-dried version still in development, the United States ordered another eight million, which were shipped to the nation’s stockpile in 2015, according to Bavarian Nordic and the U.S. Health and Human Services.

Dr. Kahn, the former federal official, remembered “the frustration on why it was taking so long to get a freeze-dried preparation that could be held for longer.”

But the eight million doses were the last substantial shipment for years. From 2015, onward, the United States instead placed orders for hundreds of millions of dollars of bulk vaccine product — basically raw vaccine stored in large bags, which would be converted to freeze-dried doses once the company perfected the process and had the necessary F.D.A. approval.

By 2017, all 27,993,370 doses in the national Jynneos stockpile had expired, although the United States still had a huge stockpile of its other smallpox vaccines.

“In fairness, I’m not sure anybody in their right mind would have thought we needed more smallpox vaccine,” said Dr. Nicole Lurie, who oversaw the stockpile during her eight-year tenure as assistant secretary for preparedness and response within Health and Human Services under President Barack Obama.

Both Jynneos and the older stockpiled smallpox vaccines, such as ACAM2000, are good choices as a smallpox vaccine. Federal officials expect ACAM2000 to protect against monkeypox and have shipped doses [to local health authorities for use](#), but its harsher side effects make many doctors uncomfortable with using it for a mass monkeypox vaccination campaign.

### **One Delay After Another**

The goal of producing freeze-dried vaccine has taken longer than expected, partly because of a slow F.D.A. review process. In recent years Bavarian Nordic also undertook an expansion that would ultimately delay delivery of vaccine doses.

Bavarian Nordic had long relied on outside companies for the final stages of the production process, such as filling the actual vials.

By 2017, the company had plans for building its own “fill-finish” facility to make its vaccine production “more profitable than what we’ve seen in the past,” according to Bavarian Nordic’s chief executive, Paul Chaplin, with the U.S. government funding a portion of this expansion.

In early 2020, the United States placed an order for 1.4 million liquid-frozen doses from Bavarian Nordic, its first significant order for ready-to-use product in years. About 372,000 of those doses were filled by a contractor and shipped back to the United States in recent weeks. They have been [the main source of doses for the country’s monkeypox vaccination program so far](#).

The rest were filled at Bavarian Nordic’s new fill-finish facility, which was up and running in 2021.

But the F.D.A. had not inspected the facility by the time the monkeypox outbreak began. As a result, the bulk of the 1.4 million-dose order sat in Denmark until last month, when F.D.A. inspectors arrived.

Now, the U.S. government has asked Bavarian Nordic to begin sending as many doses as quickly as possible, setting aside the goal of a freeze-dried formulation for the time being.

But [it may be months before](#) the company is able to deliver millions of more doses from the bulk vaccine supply that the United States has been paying Bavarian Nordic for years to store, U.S. officials say.

With far too little Jynneos on hand to contain the monkeypox outbreak, federal officials are taking a fresh look at the expired doses, which it still has on hand. Health and Human Services officials have sent samples back to Bavarian Nordic for testing.

	It is “very unlikely” they are still viable, officials say. But if they are, the Administration for Strategic Response and Preparedness, a division within H.H.S., said it would make them “available for the response.”
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Grain ship thru Russia Black Sea blockade</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/europe/ukraine-russia-grain-ship.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/europe/ukraine-russia-grain-ship.html</a>
GIST	<p>MYKOLAIV, Ukraine — A ship loaded with corn on Monday became the first cargo vessel to sail from Ukraine in more than five months of war, passing through Russia’s naval blockade of Ukraine’s Black Sea ports and raising hopes that desperately needed food will soon reach nations afflicted by shortages and soaring prices.</p> <p>The ship’s journey was the culmination of months of negotiations and an international campaign to get grain out of Ukraine, one of the world’s breadbaskets before the war. Russia’s invasion and blockade, along with Western sanctions impeding Russian exports and factors like drought and climate change, have sharply cut global grain supplies, threatening to bring famine to tens of millions of people, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.</p> <p>Mediators from the United Nations and Turkey, which shares the Black Sea coast with Russia and Ukraine, oversaw months of talks in Istanbul. Though discussions seemed hopelessly mired for weeks, in late July the parties <a href="#">struck a deal</a> to free more than 20 million tons of grain.</p> <p>The agreement could easily unravel: The ship, the Razoni, is traveling through a war zone, at risk of an attack or accident, and a breach of trust or disagreement among inspectors and officials running the multinational operation could once again freeze ships in ports.</p> <p>But if the voyage that began on Monday does go smoothly, it could be an important step toward alleviating shortages and lowering prices, though it cannot alone resolve <a href="#">the causes</a> of <a href="#">a looming global hunger crisis</a>.</p> <p>“Ensuring that grain, fertilizers, and other food-related items are available at reasonable prices to developing countries is a humanitarian imperative,” António Guterres, the U.N. secretary general, said Monday. “People on the verge of famine need these agreements to work, in order to survive.”</p> <p>With such high stakes and intense Western and Ukrainian distrust that Russia would really let cargo leave port, the ship’s departure from Odesa was closely watched on Monday.</p> <p>Crewed mostly by Syrian seaman, the Razoni was led out of the port by a tugboat. Carrying 26,000 tons of corn, the vessel and tug first navigated sea mines, placed by Ukraine to forestall any amphibious assault by Russia, and then passed by the Russian Navy vessels that largely control the Black Sea and granted safe passage.</p> <p>The ship was set to stop in Turkish waters for inspection by a joint team from Turkey, the United Nations, Ukraine and Russia on Tuesday before continuing on to the Lebanese port of Tripoli.</p> <p>Ukraine’s infrastructure minister, Oleksandr Kurbakov, said the Razoni left around 9:30 a.m. local time. There are 16 more ships waiting to leave Odesa in the coming days, he said.</p> <p>If successful, the deal to export grain could have significant economic consequences for Ukraine. The country’s agriculture minister, Mykola Solskyi, said last week that there was \$10 billion worth of grain stored in Ukraine and that the incoming harvest would add a further \$20 billion to that amount. Ukraine is a leading exporter of wheat, barley, corn and sunflower oil.</p> <p>Alongside the deal on Ukraine’s produce, another agreement would enable Russia to export grain and fertilizer, further easing the immense pressure on markets and farmers, especially in the developing world. Russia, whose exports have been constrained by Western sanctions, is a major supplier of fertilizer, and with Ukraine it supplies more than a quarter of the world’s wheat.</p>



But as the Razoni's Black Sea crossing raised hopes for some degree of cooperation between the combatants, the fighting intensified on multiple fronts in Ukraine.

Preparing for [a counteroffensive in the southern Kherson region](#), Ukraine has used long-range precision weapons, recently supplied by the West, to disrupt Russian supply lines and logistics. Ukrainian forces have attacked Russian command and control centers, hit supply routes, tried to isolate Russian forces into pockets and enlisted Ukrainian saboteurs behind enemy lines.

On Monday, Ukrainian officials said that, using American-supplied rocket artillery, their forces had blown up a Russian train carrying troops and equipment to reinforce positions in southern Ukraine, killing dozens of soldiers and destroying many rail cars.

"According to intelligence data, all the drivers and engineers of the Russian Railways company, who were transporting military cargo from Crimea to the Kherson region, were killed," Anton Gerashchenko, an adviser to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, said Monday morning.

Although his claims could not be independently verified, video of an explosion and satellite imagery of the aftermath offered evidence that the Ukrainians had struck a Russian train along one of two main rail lines running from Crimea to southern Ukraine.

The Ukrainian military also said Monday that it had in recent weeks destroyed at least 15 ammunition depots in the south, affecting supplies enough to force Russia to use surface-to-air missiles to strike ground targets. Western analysts have said that as the war goes on, Russia is relying more on munitions that are imprecise, or are designed for other uses, to bombard Ukrainian cities, causing indiscriminate damage — and possibly signaling that it is running low on the most advanced precision weapons.

The Pentagon said last week that Ukraine was using Western weapons to increasing effect, and becoming very adept at attacking Russian command and control hubs and destroying large amounts of Russian equipment. On Monday, the Biden administration announced another round of support for Ukraine: \$550 million in military aid, including more ammunition for 155-millimeter howitzer artillery pieces and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, that the United States has already provided.

But for all its sluggish or faltering progress in the war, Russia retains vast advantages in the size of its arsenal, and its military has shown a willingness and ability to strike all over the country, even as it focuses on gaining ground in eastern Ukraine. There, Russia has blanketed town after town with overwhelming artillery fire as it tries to reposition ground forces to press forward.

The strategy slowly gave Russia control of the eastern Luhansk Province, leaving many cities and villages in ruins. Russian forces have since moved to reinforce the south and to push into another eastern province, Donetsk.

"Their tactic remains much the same as it was during the hostilities in Luhansk region," Serhiy Haidai, head of Ukraine's Luhansk regional government, said on Monday.

He said the Russians were making daily attempts to mount an offensive on the city of Bakhmut, in Donetsk, but so far had failed to break through the main Ukrainian defensive lines.

Russian forces have also continued to shell residential and military areas in and around the city of Kharkiv in the northeast, putting pressure on Ukraine not to shift too many of its defenses from there.

In Chuhuiv, in the Kharkiv region and just 10 miles from Russian lines, residents were still recovering on Monday from missile strikes last week on the House of Culture, a building used since Soviet times for cultural events. In wartime, the building's kitchens were used to prepare food for the needy, but members of the city government had also used it as a temporary office, possibly a reason for the attack.

	<p>The missiles killed three people sheltering in the basement and wounded several more, according to Oleh Synyehubov, the Kharkiv regional administrator. A volunteer cook was among the dead, residents said. His brother and several other people survived.</p> <p>Two women were also killed, one of whom had been helping the cook, said a resident who gave only his first name, Maksim, wary of possible retribution. They were making an Uzbek rice dish, plov, for people in the neighborhood.</p> <p>“She was just cleaning vegetables,” Maksim said.</p> <p>Chuhuiv has come under increasing bombardment in recent days, as have the city of Kharkiv and other villages and towns in the province. Soldiers guarding the approaches to the city on Sunday said that artillery strikes had been steady much of the day, hitting an industrial area around the train station.</p> <p>The Russians “are hitting lots of places like this, all the schools as well,” said Maksim. “They are doing it to make the people leave.”</p> <p>People were getting the message, and the town was largely empty, he said. He was preparing to leave too, he said. He and his family had plans to emigrate to Canada.</p> <p>“There is nothing left here,” he said.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/01 Ukraine ‘deep war’; Russia scorched earth</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/europe/ukraine-russia-military.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/europe/ukraine-russia-military.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>A Russian train carrying troops and equipment to reinforce positions in southern Ukraine was blown up by American-supplied precision missiles over the weekend, killing dozens of soldiers and destroying many rail cars, according to Ukrainian officials, who released satellite imagery of the strike site to support their claim.</p> <p>At the same time, Russia sought to renew its flailing effort to advance in eastern Ukraine, once again blanketing the front with overwhelming artillery fire as it tried to reposition ground forces to press forward.</p> <p>On multiple fronts, the Ukrainian and Russian militaries were trying to dictate both how and where the battle is fought. Much will turn on which army succeeds in that effort.</p> <p>For the Ukrainians, that means attacking the Russians where they are weakest on both the eastern and southern fronts, employing some of the same tactics they used in the early months of the war to drive the Russians from around Kyiv and other cities and towns in the north.</p> <p>For the Russians, that means using the kind of brute force that has laid waste to many of the cities now under their control.</p> <p>As more long-range Western weapons have arrived in the country, Ukraine has been increasingly able to wage what military analysts call a “deep war,” attacking Russian command and control centers, hitting key supply routes, trying to isolate Russian forces in pockets, and enlisting Ukrainian guerrillas behind enemy lines in the south to assist in targeting Russian positions and engage in sabotage.</p> <p>The attack on the train over the weekend was the latest in a series of strikes that have disrupted Russian logistical efforts and inflicted grave losses.</p> <p>“According to intelligence data, all the drivers and engineers of the Russian Railways company, who were transporting military cargo from Crimea to the Kherson region, were killed,” Anton Gerashchenko, an adviser to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, said on Monday morning.</p>

While his specific claims could not be independently verified, video of an explosion and satellite imagery of the aftermath offered evidence that the Ukrainians had struck a Russian train along one of two main rail lines running from Crimea to southern Ukraine.

The Ukrainian military said on Monday that in recent weeks it had destroyed at least 15 ammunition depots in southern Ukraine alone — with many of the strikes captured on video — forcing the Russians to use surface-to-air missiles to strike ground targets. The Pentagon said last week that Ukraine was using Western weapons to increasingly devastating effect.

The Ukrainians have become very effective in finding and killing Russian command and control hubs and destroying large amounts of Russian equipment, a senior U.S. Defense Department official said on Friday.

The exiled Ukrainian governor of Kherson, Dmytro Butrii, said on Monday that some 46 villages in the province had been liberated but that some of them had been nearly completely destroyed and were still under Russian shelling.

The Russians have shown that they can still cause widespread death and destruction with the vast arsenal still at their disposal.

Use of overwhelming force has been at the heart of Russian military doctrine since Soviet days. The advances their forces made this spring in the eastern Luhansk region came only after Russian artillery had basically reduced towns to rubble.

“Their tactic remains much the same as it was during the hostilities in Luhansk region,” Serhiy Haidai, head of the Luhansk Regional Military Administration, said on Monday.

He said the Russians were making daily attempts to mount an offensive on the city of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region but so far had failed to break through the main Ukrainian defensive lines.

Russia’s forces in the east — as well as in certain parts of the south — were also massing troops to try to advance along several lines of attack, the Ukrainian military high command said. While Western military analysts think it is unlikely that Russia will succeed in any attempt to gain large new swaths of territory, the Ukrainians would need to respond — influencing how quickly they can mount a counteroffensive in southern Ukraine.

The Ukrainian government has expressed growing confidence that as long as the West continues to supply the weapons it needs, Ukraine can win the war. But Kyiv also must persuade a war-weary public and Western allies to be patient.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Kentucky braces: more heavy rain, floods</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/kentucky-flood-death-toll.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/us/kentucky-flood-death-toll.html</a>
GIST	<p>More heavy rain was expected on Tuesday morning across a large portion of Kentucky, potentially <a href="#">complicating efforts to rescue hundreds of people</a> still unaccounted for days after severe flooding left at least 37 dead.</p> <p>Flood watches were <a href="#">in effect until 9 a.m. Tuesday</a> across an area of eastern Kentucky where hundreds of thousands of people live, as well as until 8 a.m. for a region of West Virginia that includes Charleston, the state capital. Flood watches for Cincinnati and other parts of southern Ohio were set to expire by 4 a.m.</p> <p>A thunderstorm moving southeast through western Kentucky late Monday had already produced 60-mile-an-hour wind gusts and hailstones the size of silver dollars, a National Weather Service office in Paducah <a href="#">said in an advisory</a>.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>The Weather Service predicted more <a href="#">heavy rain and high winds</a> overnight as a cold front moved southeast toward the Central Appalachians from the Ohio Valley. It also warned that excessive runoff in places that had already seen recent heavy rainfall could potentially produce more “<a href="#">life-threatening flash flooding</a>.”</p> <p>“Not what we want to see!” <a href="#">Chris Bailey</a>, a veteran meteorologist in Lexington, Ky., said of the forecast on Twitter. He warned that new precipitation could create “additional flooding issues” as storms moved from western to eastern Kentucky overnight.</p> <p>The prospect of more floods would be the central concern overnight in eastern Kentucky, the part of the state hit hardest by last week’s flooding, Gov. Andy Beshear <a href="#">said in a Twitter thread</a> late Monday.</p> <p>That flooding, some of the worst in the state’s history, left at least 37 people dead, Mr. Beshear <a href="#">announced</a>. He also said at a news briefing that there were “hundreds of unaccounted-for people, minimum,” and that rescue operations had been hampered by impassable roads and washed-out bridges.</p> <p>As rainstorms blew through eastern Kentucky’s remote hills and valleys on Monday, rescue workers were still trying to move through areas where the floods, and the mudslides they unleashed, had destroyed infrastructure and cut off cellphone service.</p> <p>More than 10,000 Kentucky households were still without power as of early Tuesday morning, according to the site <a href="#">poweroutage.us</a>. And in some places, floodwaters had once again swallowed roads that had reopened to let emergency workers through after the initial flooding last week.</p> <p>While linking climate change to a single flood event requires extensive analysis, most scientists agree that climate change is causing heavier rainfall in many storms.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 US, Indonesia kick off annual exercises</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/1/us-indonesia-kick-annual-exercises-tensions-grow-c/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/1/us-indonesia-kick-annual-exercises-tensions-grow-c/</a>
GIST	<p>The U.S. and Indonesia are holding joint military exercises amid rising tensions with China in response to Beijing’s growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.</p> <p>Australia, Japan and Singapore will join the U.S. and Indonesia for Garuda Shield 2022, scheduled to run Aug. 1-14, according to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.</p> <p>Officials said about 2,000 U.S. troops and an equal number from Indonesia are taking part in the exercises, which will focus on areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, along with combatting conventional and unconventional threats in the region.</p> <p>Former Democratic officials blast 'destructive' party spending on pro-Trump Republicans In addition to staff-level command post exercises focusing on U.N. peacekeeping operations, company-sized units will hold joint maneuvers to practice warfighting skills.</p> <p>“I’m proud to see how Garuda Shield has grown since last year — expanding this summer to a joint, multinational exercise that includes all of our service components,” Gen. Charles Flynn, commander of U.S. Army Pacific, said in a statement. “It’s a symbol of the U.S.-Indonesia bond and the growing relationship between land forces in this consequential region.”</p> <p>Canada, France, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and the United Kingdom are expected to join Garuda Shield 2022 as observer nations, officials said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 China, Taiwan step up military rhetoric</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/taiwan-and-china-step-up-military-rhetoric-as-expected-pelosi-visit-looms">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/taiwan-and-china-step-up-military-rhetoric-as-expected-pelosi-visit-looms</a>

## GIST

Taiwan's defence ministry has warned it would appropriately dispatch forces in reaction to "enemy threats", as China stepped up its military rhetoric on the day of a highly controversial expected visit to Taipei by US speaker Nancy Pelosi.

In a statement on Tuesday, the defence ministry said it had a full grasp of military activity near Taiwan and the "determination, ability and confidence" to ensure Taiwan's national security. It added that it had made various unspecified plans for an emergency.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's premier reiterated that it "warmly welcomes" foreign guests, ahead of the potential visit by Pelosi. Taiwan "would make the most appropriate arrangements" for such guests and respect their plans, Premier Su Tseng-chang told reporters on Tuesday when asked about a visit.

The statements came after Reuters reported several Chinese warships and planes had travelled near the median line – an unofficial border between [China](#) and Taiwan in the Taiwan Strait. Citing unnamed sources, the report said the vessels had been in the area since Monday, while the latest flights occurred on Tuesday morning, prompting Taiwan's air force to scramble its own aircraft in response.

Taiwan's defence ministry has earlier reportedly adjusted and strengthened the military's combat readiness in response to the threat of China. According to public broadcaster CNA, it had not formally changed the readiness level, which relates to just two stages: the current regular staging, and war time.

China has also announced several days of live-fire exercises in the region, though these could relate to events marking Monday's anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The PLA also posted a propaganda video that did not mention Taiwan but depicted live-fire exercises and said it would "bury incoming enemies".

On Tuesday several Chinese officials issued further warnings. The ambassador to the US, Qin Gang, shared the PLA video, saying the military "will not sit idly by when it comes to safeguarding national sovereignty & territorial integrity".

The former ambassador to the UK Liu Xiaoming, largely echoed other government statements. "A visit to Taiwan by her would constitute a gross interference in China's internal affairs, seriously undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, wantonly trample on the one-China principle," he said.

Overnight, Chinese authorities announced a sudden ban on imports from more than 100 Taiwanese food companies, local media reported, which was interpreted as an act of retribution over the expected visit, a trade tool China has often used in bilateral disputes.

Multiple media reports have said Pelosi will land in Taipei on Tuesday night and meet Taiwan's president on Wednesday, as an unofficial stop during her Asia tour. Pelosi, a longtime China hawk, will be the most senior member of the US government to visit Taiwan in decades, and Beijing has repeatedly threatened undefined "countermeasures" in response.

Pelosi has refused to confirm her trip to Taiwan – a rescheduled visit after plans in April were postponed when she contracted Covid-19 – but the lack of denials and multiple leaks to media have driven an angry response from China and fears the situation could escalate.

Taiwan is a self-governing democracy and has never been ruled by China's ruling Communist party (CCP), but Beijing claims it as a province it intends to "reunify", by force if necessary. The CCP strongly objects to foreign shows of support for what it says is a "separatist" government in Taiwan, especially from the US.

Taiwan, whose government has refused to comment on the visit, often welcomes foreign delegations as it seeks to grow its international relationships. Few countries recognise Taiwan as a country, including the

US, but Washington has legislated requirements to give Taiwan self-defence support, and has been strengthening unofficial ties.

Sources in Taiwan have told the Guardian there is a general concern that if Pelosi did not visit it would suggest the US can be cowed by verbal threats, and would damage Taiwan's trust in their support.

On Tuesday Kolas Yotaka, a former Taiwan presidential spokeswoman and now a county government candidate, said she supported the visit.

"No one has the right to say whether Speaker Pelosi 'should' come to Taiwan or not," she said. "Only she can decide, and she should not feel threatened. I am looking forward to her visit. It makes us feel less isolated, and believe there are still people who maintain their beliefs and ideals."

The Chinese reaction to reports of Pelosi's visits has been heightened, albeit without specifics. In a lengthy phone call last week, China's president Xi Jinping warned US president Joe Biden against "playing with fire" over Taiwan, while officials have repeatedly said the PLA would not "stand idly by" over the visit. Analysts in Taiwan and overseas have expressed concern that Beijing's rhetoric has reached a level that would force them to take action to avoid losing face.

On Monday the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said Pelosi's decision to visit was hers entirely, as leader of the co-equal Congress branch of government. He noted visits by previous speakers and other members of Congress to Taiwan, and urged calm from China.

"We are looking for them, in the event she decides to visit, to act responsibly and not to engage in any escalation going forward."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 British MPs plan visit to Taiwan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/british-mps-plan-visit-to-taiwan-as-tension-with-china-simmers">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/british-mps-plan-visit-to-taiwan-as-tension-with-china-simmers</a>
GIST	<p>Britain's House of Commons foreign affairs committee is planning a visit to <a href="#">Taiwan</a> later this year – probably in November or early December – despite rising tensions in the region, the Guardian has learned.</p> <p>Sources say the trip – which was originally scheduled for early this year but was postponed due to one member of the delegation testing positive for Covid – was intended to show Britain's support for the democratically run island, which <a href="#">China considers its own</a>.</p> <p>It comes as London's relationship with Beijing continues to deteriorate. Last week, the Conservative leadership candidates, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak, articulated their tough positions on China. And China's ambassador to the UK accused some British politicians of "peddling the fallacy of the so-called China threat" <a href="#">in a video remark</a>.</p> <p>Tensions have been rising in the Taiwan strait in recent weeks after reports of <a href="#">a possible trip to Taipei by the US House speaker, Nancy Pelosi</a>. Beijing has repeatedly warned against such a move and has threatened to take "decisive actions" if the trip goes ahead. Pelosi is now on a trip to Asia, where she has scheduled stops in Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and South Korea.</p> <p>On Saturday, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted "live-fire exercises" near Pingtan island off Fujian province, according to the official Xinhua news agency. China's maritime safety administration warned ships to avoid the area. The drills also came ahead of the 1 August PLA founding anniversary.</p> <p>Advertisement</p> <p>During their fifth phone call last week, China's president, Xi Jinping, warned the US president, Joe Biden, not to "play with fire" over Taiwan. On Monday, China's spokesperson said its military <a href="#">would "not sit idly by"</a> if Pelosi went ahead with the Taiwan trip.</p>



Tom Tugendhat, who chairs the foreign affairs select committee, is expected to lead the delegation to Taiwan later this year. But as he extended his backing to Truss over the weekend, there was speculation he may be given a cabinet-level job in her administration if she wins the race in September. But even if this happened, one source said, the trip would go ahead “whoever becomes the next chair”.

It is unclear whether the British delegation would meet Taiwan’s president, Tsai Ing-wen. Details of the trip are being hammered out, including the dates of the visit, sources have suggested. In the past, the Taiwanese leader has personally welcomed delegations from the European parliament and members of the US and Czech senates.

The move is yet another sign that London is strengthening its ties with Taiwan as it now regards China as a long-term threat to the UK. Officially, Britain continues to stick to its “one-China policy”, which recognises Beijing as the sole legal government of China, but it keeps ties with Taiwan on an unofficial level.

Truss, the foreign secretary, has in recent months urged western countries to [ensure Taiwan can protect itself from China](#). In June, she remarked in an interview that the UK should provide Taiwan with weapons – a comment that surprised some of her fellow MPs and colleagues, the Guardian understands.

The Taipei representative office in London declined to comment on details of the potential visit when approached by the Guardian, but it said Taiwan “welcomes any opportunities to strengthen its relations with Britain, including through visits from the UK”.

The foreign affairs committee said it “has had a longstanding intention to visit Taiwan, within the context of its inquiry into the tilt to the Indo-Pacific”. But it declined to comment on the details of the visit “due to security concerns and in line with normal practice”.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Seafair's Fleet Week in Seattle</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/us-navy-coast-guard-royal-canadian-seafair-seattle-fleet-week/281-4ae550d1-a59a-4388-b9f9-d86c86dc9c1b">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/us-navy-coast-guard-royal-canadian-seafair-seattle-fleet-week/281-4ae550d1-a59a-4388-b9f9-d86c86dc9c1b</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — From the sea to the sky expect to hear and see the roar of engines across the Puget Sound.</p> <p>Monday marks the start of <a href="#">Fleet Week</a> which culminates with Seafair weekend, a long-standing tradition in the Pacific Northwest.</p> <p>Hovering just a few hundred feet from Pier 62 – the US Coast Guard is flexing its muscles with a rescue demo to kick off Fleet Week.</p> <p>Temperatures in the 80s are providing a warm welcome for sailors and guardsmen from both the US and Canada.</p> <p>“The chopper can be used every day – and people’s lives depend on it – plus who doesn’t like choppers?,” said Jonathan Osenga, an elementary school-aged Seafair fan.</p> <p>Fleet Week in Seattle is a tradition that dates back to the 50s – a celebration that brings out service members past and present.</p> <p>“I was in the Navy 20 years and I loved when I served and it’s fun to get caught up with what’s going on with the services by having exposure with all the active duty that come in and participate,” said Larry St Pierre, a retired US Navy veteran.</p> <p>This is the first in-person celebration in more than two years.</p>

	<p>"Please spread the word Seafair summer is back," said Delmas Whittaker with the Port of Seattle. "As a member of the board of directors for Seafair, I am extremely excited to see the energy that is being generated."</p> <p>As you look for military vessels on the water don't forget to look up from time to time. The US Navy's Blue Angels will return to the airspace – sticking to their traditional route over Lake Washington with performances planned for Friday, Saturday and Sunday.</p> <p>New this year is the debut of the F/A-18 Super Hornet.</p> <p>Boat pilots are back too -- hydroplane races are back with the Home Street Bank Cup Kicking off Friday.</p> <p>"All the boats are looking good right now and we're looking to have a good show," said Hydroplane Pilot Jimmy Shane.</p> <p>A show that despite their best efforts just did not translate to a virtual event – at least that's what the diehards will tell you. A roar and a sight you must take in in person.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Lightning sparks fires in Oregon, Cascades</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/lightning-sparks-over-a-dozen-fires-in-central-oregon-and-along-the-cascades-willamette-deschutes-umpqua-lake-billy-chinook-jefferson-county-douglas-klamath">https://komonews.com/news/local/lightning-sparks-over-a-dozen-fires-in-central-oregon-and-along-the-cascades-willamette-deschutes-umpqua-lake-billy-chinook-jefferson-county-douglas-klamath</a>
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. — Firefighters responded to 15 wildfires started by lightning Sunday, July 31, and overnight.</p> <p>Officials say they are working to locate six other smoke reports.</p> <p>The Fly Creek Fire, located along the Metolius arm of Lake Billy Chinook on the Deschutes National Forest has grown to 280 acres as of Monday morning. Six engines and a dozer worked through the night and were able to secure 5% containment.</p> <p>Two hand crews, one Hotshot crew, six engines, one dozer, and one water tender will be working to increase containment today. Air support will be using water from Lake Billy Chinook and portions of the lake will be closed for public safety.</p> <p>The Level 3 "GO NOW" evacuations that were issued Sunday night are still in place for the Perry South and Monty Campgrounds. The level 2 "Get Set" evacuation notice for the Three Rivers area remains in place as well.</p> <p>Public looking for evacuation information is asked to contact the <a href="#">Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Facebook</a> page.</p> <p>The Tolo Mountain fire remains at 41 acres and is 50% contained.</p> <p>The West Cultus Fire located about two miles northwest of Cultus Lake on the Deschutes National Forest has burned a tenth of an acre in heavy dead and fallen trees. One hand crew is assigned to the fire and is making good progress.</p> <p>The Potter Fire, caused by lightning, is 400 acres and is not contained. The fire is burning south of Highway 58 on the Willamette National Forest. 43 fire personnel, two crews, and two helicopters are battling the blaze.</p> <p>The Windigo Fire started Saturday afternoon, July 30, and is currently burning on the Douglas and Klamath County divide.</p>

	<p>The fire has burned 1500 acres and suppression efforts are underway according to officials. A Type 2 Incident Management Team is expected to arrive Monday to manage this fire, as well as the Potter fire, burning to the north.</p> <p>Officials say that smoke from the wildfires in California is causing poor visibility and a Red Flag Warning is posted for lightning Monday afternoon.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Fire danger remains high Inland Northwest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/weather/krem-2-weather-forecast/293-a0f43ff2-aa37-4afc-bcfc-b661849f38c1">https://www.krem.com/article/weather/krem-2-weather-forecast/293-a0f43ff2-aa37-4afc-bcfc-b661849f38c1</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Cooler temperatures are back in the forecast for much of the Northwest. But as the cooler weather moves in, there are 2 things of note. First, fire danger will be high to start the week.</p> <p>Second, while this week will offer a little break from the heat, it likely moves back in next week.</p> <p><b>Red Flag Warnings</b> are in place in central and eastern Washington for low relative humidity, high temperatures, and strong gusting wind. With wind gusts near 35 miles per hour, any spark has the potential to turn into a fire and then spread quickly. Spokane looks to be under the Red Flag Warning through 10pm Tuesday.</p> <p>As wind dies down, cooler weather settles in. Temps fall into the low 90s Tuesday and Wednesday before dipping into the 80s to close out the workweek. Right now the weekend is looking sunny and seasonal with temperatures near 90 degrees.</p> <p>A word of caution, heat returns to the forecast next week. It's likely many of us are back in the triple digits next week. Enjoy the break from the heat while you can.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Spokane gas prices fall to average \$4.77/gal</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/money/spokane-gas-prices-falling-this-week/293-f768fcc3-3780-446f-9eec-1074d48da4c5">https://www.krem.com/article/money/spokane-gas-prices-falling-this-week/293-f768fcc3-3780-446f-9eec-1074d48da4c5</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE COUNTY, Wash. — Average gas prices in Spokane are down 12.6 cents per gallon in the last week, bringing Spokane's average price to \$4.77 per gallon as of Monday, according to <a href="#">GasBuddy's</a> weekly survey of 187 stations in Spokane.</p> <p>The average gas price in the U.S. has gone down 15.9 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.17 per gallon as of Monday.</p> <p>The national average is down 65.5 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.02 per gallon higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data.</p> <p>The average gas prices are falling in every state, with the national average down for the seventh straight week.</p> <p>Patrick De Haan, GasBuddy's head of petroleum analysis, said in a press release that nearly 20 states have also seen their gas average decline to \$3.99 or less, with over 70,000 stations now at that level or below.</p> <p>"For now, Americans are seeing prices nearly 90 cents lower than their mid-June peak and are spending close to \$330 million less on gasoline every day as a result," De Haan said.</p> <p>Gas prices in Spokane are 38.2 cents per gallon lower than a month ago as of Monday, July 11. According to the GasBuddy survey, the cheapest gas in Spokane on Sunday was \$4.49 a gallon, while the most expensive was \$4.99 per gallon, a difference of 2.10 cents per gallon.</p>

	<p>Washington's average gas price currently stands at \$4.95 per gallon, down 13.6 cents from last week, according to the GasBuddy survey.</p> <p>In the state of Idaho, the average price of gas last week was \$5.03 compared to \$4.88 as of Monday.</p> <p>The national average price of diesel has also fallen by 14.8 cents in the past week and stands at \$5.27 per gallon, according to GasBuddy.</p> <p>"The outlook is for a continued drop in most areas. However, some supply tightness in areas of the Northeastern U.S. could push prices up slightly until inventories rise, or imports do," De Haan said.</p> <p>De Haan said that as long as oil prices stay at these levels or lower, people will see another gas price decline in most areas this week.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 King Co. ME office: 6 heat-related deaths</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/6-heat-related-deaths-reported-in-king-county">https://www.q13fox.com/news/6-heat-related-deaths-reported-in-king-county</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - At least six people have died in King County from what the medical examiner's office is <a href="#">contributing to the heatwave</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">Seattle set records on Sunday</a> for having the most consecutive days of temperatures in the 90s. Temperatures hit around 95 for several days in a row.</p> <p>As a result, the King County Medical Examiner's Office <a href="#">has attributed six deaths to the heat wave</a>-- three of which were reported drownings and the other three were hyperthermia. Hyperthermia occurs when the body's heat-regulating mechanisms don't work effectively, which can cause confusion, nausea or vomiting, and rapid breathing. If your body temperature gets over 103 degrees, hyperthermia is life-threatening.</p> <p>KCMEO collected data from <a href="#">July 26 to July 31</a>. The six deaths are the most recent data available, and more could be confirmed in the coming days.</p> <p>"Because heat-related deaths might not occur, be found, or confirmed immediately after heat exposure, additional deaths from this period may be identified later," KCMEO said.</p> <p>In Oregon, authorities are <a href="#">investigating four additional deaths potentially linked to last week's scorching heat wave</a>, bringing the total number of suspected hyperthermia deaths to 14.</p> <p>The Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office said Monday the designation of heat-related death is preliminary and requires further investigation.</p> <p>About 800 people died in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia during last year's heat wave, which hit in late June and early July of 2021. Temperatures were in triple digits for several days.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 US warns China on Pelosi trip to Taiwan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/us/politics/taiwan-pelosi.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/us/politics/taiwan-pelosi.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The United States warned China on Monday not to respond to <a href="#">an expected trip to Taiwan by Speaker Nancy Pelosi</a> with military provocations even as American officials sought to reassure Beijing that such a visit would not be the first of its kind nor represent any change in policy toward the region.</p> <p>With tensions rising on the eve of Ms. Pelosi's anticipated arrival in Taipei, the White House said it was concerned that China might fire missiles into the Taiwan Strait, send warplanes into Taiwan's air defense zone or stage large-scale naval or air activities that cross traditional lines.</p>

“There is no reason for Beijing to turn a potential visit consistent with longstanding U.S. policy into some sort of crisis or conflict, or use it as a pretext to increase aggressive military activity in or around the Taiwan Strait,” John F. Kirby, a National Security Council spokesman, told reporters. “Meanwhile,” he added, “our actions are not threatening and they break no new ground. Nothing about this potential visit — potential visit, which oh, by the way, has precedent — would change the status quo.”

But Beijing made clear it was not reassured. “We would like to tell the United States once again that China is standing by, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army will never sit idly by, and China will take resolute responses and strong countermeasures to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Zhao Lijian, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, told reporters. “As for what measures, if she dares to go, then let’s wait and see.”

The standoff over the speaker’s visit has set nerves on edge on both sides of the Pacific at a time when the United States is already consumed with helping Ukraine fight off Russia’s invasion. Even as they were trying to head off a confrontation in Asia on Monday, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and other officials were announcing a new [\\$550 million shipment of arms to Ukraine](#).

While military, intelligence and diplomatic officials who briefed Ms. Pelosi before she left for Asia cautioned that a stop in Taiwan might instigate a response that could escalate out of control, President Biden stopped short of urging her not to go out of deference to her status as head of a separate, equal branch of government.

In [a telephone call](#) with President Xi Jinping of China last week, Mr. Biden explained that he did not control Ms. Pelosi and, as a longtime former member of Congress himself, respected her right to make her own decisions. But American officials fear that China does not accept that he has no power to stop her.

Mr. Blinken stressed that point on Monday. “The speaker will make her own decisions about whether or not to visit Taiwan,” he said. “Congress is an independent, coequal branch of government. The decision is entirely the speaker’s.

He added that members of Congress routinely go to Taiwan, including earlier this year. “And so if the speaker does decide to visit, and China tries to create some kind of crisis or otherwise escalate tensions, that would be entirely on Beijing,” Mr. Blinken said. “We are looking for them, in the event she decides to visit, to act responsibly and not to engage in any escalation going forward.”

Ms. Pelosi, who arrived in Singapore on Monday, has not officially confirmed her plan to stop in Taiwan, citing security concerns. But local reports in Taiwan said officials there had been informed that she would arrive on Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning local time. She originally planned to visit Taiwan in April but called off that trip after testing positive for the coronavirus.

American officials monitoring intelligence reports have become convinced in recent days that China is preparing a hostile response of some sort — not an outright attack on Taiwan or an effort to intercept Ms. Pelosi’s plane, as some fear, but an assertion of military power that may go beyond even the aggressive encounters of recent months. Some cited the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995 and 1996, when China fired missiles to intimidate the self-governing island and President Bill Clinton ordered aircraft carriers into area.

Analysts said a similar conflict could be vastly more perilous today because the People’s Liberation Army is far more robust than it was then, armed now with missiles that could take out carriers. The worry is that even if no combat is intended, an accidental encounter could easily spiral out of control. “This is an exceptionally dangerous situation, perhaps more so than Ukraine,” said Evan Medeiros, a China expert at Georgetown University and a former Asia adviser to President Barack Obama. “The risks of escalation are immediate and substantial.”

At the White House, Mr. Kirby did not say whether American intelligence agencies had detected any concrete indications of Chinese actions, but he was unusually specific in outlining the possible responses that the United States anticipated.

White House officials have privately [expressed concern](#) that a visit by Ms. Pelosi would touch off a dangerous cycle of escalation in Asia at the same time Washington is already consumed with helping Ukraine fight off Russia's invasion. Much of America's military industrial complex is busy arming Ukraine, which could hamper efforts to bolster weapons shipments to Taiwan.

Mr. Kirby said American officials did not necessarily anticipate an attack by China in response but cautioned that the possible military demonstrations of force could touch off a conflict by mistake. "It does increase the risk of miscalculation, which could lead to unintended consequences," Mr. Kirby said.

He seemed particularly intent on getting the message through to Beijing that it should not view any visit by Ms. Pelosi as a fresh provocation by the United States since she would not be the first speaker to go there; Speaker Newt Gingrich stopped in Taiwan in 1997. Mr. Kirby also stressed repeatedly that the United States still subscribed to its one-China policy of not recognizing independence for Taiwan.

"We've laid out very clearly if she goes — if she goes — it's not without precedent," he said. "It's not new. It doesn't change anything."

While White House officials held out little hope of deterring Beijing, they opted to outline the possible Chinese responses to set the geopolitical ground in case there is a provocation so it will not come as a surprise.

But even if they get past the immediate conflict without escalation, officials worry that the dispute will accelerate an increasingly assertive posture by China, which has been moving in that direction in recent months anyway. Analysts said Mr. Xi cannot afford to look weak heading into a critical party congress in the fall when he will seek a third term.

Just as Mr. Xi's domestic politics were a factor, so were Mr. Biden's and Ms. Pelosi's. Even if the speaker wanted to cancel her stop in Taiwan, it would be problematic at home because it would be viewed as an act of appeasement with a revanchist power. Republicans have been particularly vocal in encouraging her to proceed with the trip regardless of the Biden administration's qualms.

Senator Marco Rubio, Republican of Florida, said that China should not push the United States over her trip. "I pray leaders of the Communist Party of #China will remember ancient but wise advice," he wrote on Twitter, citing an aphorism, "When anger arises think of the consequences."

"We may have deep domestic political differences," he added, "but we will respond with unbreakable unity if threatened from abroad."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 US sends \$550M more weapons to Ukraine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/ukraine-russia-news-war#us-ukraine-weapons-military-aid">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/02/world/ukraine-russia-news-war#us-ukraine-weapons-military-aid</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The White House announced on Monday that the United States would send another \$550 million in arms to Ukraine to help it fend off Russian invaders, increasing the total American investment in war fighting there to more than \$8 billion since the invasion began in February.</p> <p><a href="#">President Biden</a> authorized the latest package as the first cargo ship of food <a href="#">finally left the Ukrainian port city of Odesa</a> after months of Russian blockade, in accordance with an agreement with Moscow. The White House called on the Kremlin to continue abiding by the pact in order to ease a growing food crisis around the world.</p>



	<p>“Russia has, of course, weaponized food,” said John F. Kirby, a spokesman for the National Security Council. “We urge Russia to meet its commitments under this new arrangement.”</p> <p>Mr. Kirby said that Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken; Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Jake Sullivan, the national security adviser, had informed their Ukrainian counterparts about the new weapons shipments on Monday. Mr. Blinken said in a statement that he was authorizing a drawdown of arms and equipment from Department of Defense inventories for Ukraine’s self-defense.</p> <p>The arms transfer will include ammunition for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or <a href="#">HIMARS, rocket launchers</a> that <a href="#">have been used to destroy Russian command posts and ammunition depots</a> as well as for 155-millimeter howitzers already in use by Ukrainian troops, Mr. Kirby said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Ukrainians start bracing for difficult winter</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/business/ukraine-russia-energy-europe.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/business/ukraine-russia-energy-europe.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article</a>
GIST	<p>In a thickly forested park bordered by apartment blocks and a playground, a dozen workers were busy on a recent day with chain saws and axes, felling trees, cutting logs and chopping them into firewood to be stashed in concealed sheds around Lviv, the largest city in western Ukraine.</p> <p>Ironworkers at a nearby forge are working overtime to produce wood-burning stoves to be stored in strategic locations. In municipal depots, room is being made to stockpile reserves of coal.</p> <p>The activity in Lviv is being played out in towns and cities across Ukraine, part of a nationwide effort to amass emergency arsenals of backup fuel and critical provisions as Russia tightens its chokehold on energy supplies across Europe.</p> <p>As President Vladimir V. Putin slashes natural gas flows to Ukraine’s European allies, the government in Kyiv has accused Russia of also stepping up the destruction of critical infrastructure that provides heat, water and electricity to millions of homes, businesses and factories.</p> <p>“All cities are preparing for a hard winter,” said Andriy Sadovyi, the mayor of Lviv, where Russian rockets knocked out three electrical substations in April, temporarily cutting power to neighborhoods. “Russia has turned off the gas to our neighbors, and they are trying to pressure us, too,” he said. “Our goal is survival. We need to be ready.”</p> <p>The urgency escalated after Russia again <a href="#">curtailed gas supplies</a> to Europe last week, leading the European Union to announce that it will <a href="#">reduce imports</a> of Russian gas so as not to be held hostage. <a href="#">Russia turned off the gas taps to Latvia</a> on Saturday, after the government there announced additional military assistance for Ukraine, the latest in a string of European countries to do so.</p> <p>Ukraine buys its natural gas from European neighbors, so the restriction of deliveries to Europe threatens its access to energy, too.</p> <p>Ukrainians frequently say they hope to defeat Russia by the time the cold weather arrives in October. But the leadership is also girding for the possibility of a drawn-out conflict in which Russia turns up the pressure by methodically strangling Ukrainians’ ability to keep warm.</p> <p>Hundreds of thousands of civilians living in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine were <a href="#">ordered to evacuate</a> this past weekend after months of relentless Russian bombardment destroyed the infrastructure needed to deliver heat and electricity.</p> <p>“We understand that the Russians may continue targeting critical energy infrastructure before and during the winter,” said Oleksiy Chernyshov, Ukraine’s minister for communities and territories development, in an interview.</p>

“They’ve demolished central heating stations in big cities, and physical devastation is still happening nationwide,” he said. “We are working to repair damage, but it doesn’t mean we won’t have more.”

Far from Ukraine’s embattled southeastern front, the campaign is being waged in forests and in steel forges, at gas storage sites and electrical stations, and even in basement boiler rooms, as the government mobilizes regions to activate a blueprint for amassing fuel and shelter.

Hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of firewood is being cut in forests around the country, Yuriy Bolokhovets, the head of Ukraine’s forest agency, said in a statement.

Under the government’s plan, so-called mobile heating units would be set up in cities of up to 200,000 people where shelling has cut heat or electricity, to help residents cope with outages until damaged infrastructure can be fixed.

Ukraine relies on a mix of natural gas and electricity generated by nuclear, hydro and fossil-fuel power stations.

In an unlikely twist, the war has left Ukraine with an electricity surplus after millions of people fled the country and economic activity slowed, lowering demand. The war sped up longstanding efforts to [disconnect Ukraine’s energy grid from Russia](#) and Belarus and link it directly to the European Union’s.

Last month, [Ukraine began exporting](#) small amounts of electricity to Romania, with hopes of eventually supplying European companies that have been hit by Russian natural gas cuts, a potential source of valuable income.

But Ukrainian officials say the ability to supply electricity at home, especially over the coming winter, when temperatures can fall far below freezing, is increasingly threatened as Russia intensifies a campaign of targeting the infrastructure that delivers energy.

Russian shelling has hit thermal power plants around the country and over 200 gas-fired boiler plants used for centralized heating. Around 5,000 kilometers of gas pipelines have been damaged, along with 3,800 gas distribution centers, according to an [analysis](#) by the Woodrow Wilson International Center’s Kennan Institute, a think tank focused on Russia.

Gas is especially critical for Ukraine because it is used to warm thousands of high-rise apartment complexes, schools, post offices and municipal buildings that rely on centralized heating systems.

Naftogaz, the state-owned oil and gas company, maintains the [largest gas reserves in Europe](#) and has 11 billion cubic meters in storage. Andrii Zakrevskyi, head of the Ukrainian oil and gas association, said Monday that was enough to meet Ukraine’s needs before the war — but the level is [roughly half](#) what the government would like it to be.

While Moscow’s gas cuts have set Europe [racing to secure new energy sources](#), the pain circles back to Ukraine, which imports gas from Europe after halting direct imports from Russia after the 2014 annexation of Crimea. Russia’s squeeze has pushed European gas futures prices to record levels, making imports more expensive at a time when the government in Kyiv is facing a budget crisis.

All of which has gotten the country mobilized in a hurry.

Swiatoslaw and Zoriana Bielinski recently stocked the cellar of their modest Lviv home with wood. The couple has purchased scores of batteries and several battery-operated lamps in case the lights go out, and they were preparing to buy gas bottles for cooking.

“We have to start thinking about this,” said Alicja Bielinska, Mr. Bielinski’s sister, who had helped the couple stock up. “Ultimately, we can survive without light and gas, but we won’t be able to survive if the invaders take over.”

Officials responsible for city planning have stockpiled on a much grander scale, collecting thousands of tons of wood and a large stash of coal in the last week alone. Mr. Sadovyi, Lviv’s mayor, said more supplies were on the way and has ordered thermostats to be lowered to 15 degrees Celsius (59 degrees Fahrenheit) when winter sets in.

On a recent day, Mr. Sadovyi buzzed around the city hall courtyard, greeting locals who had gathered for now-regular demonstrations on how to prepare for heat and electricity cuts — or worse. Two emergency workers showed residents how to put on a chemical suit in case of an attack: gas mask firmly in place, the suit sealed tight over the head.

Forges have shifted some production to put a priority on making tens of thousands wood-burning stoves, some emblazoned with the Ukrainian coat of arms. Town halls in over 200 cities are building stockpiles, along with tents that can house up to 50 people apiece in the event that multifamily apartment buildings are left without gas needed to heat them.

The tents can be moved quickly to sites without electricity or heat, providing emergency shelter and stoves for boiling water and cooking, said Mr. Chernyshov, the development minister.

“We hope we won’t have to use them,” said Iryna Dzhuryk, an administrative director in Lviv. “But this is an absolutely unusual situation. We are shocked by what we’re facing and worried about making sure we have enough to keep people warm.”

Nearby, sheds recently built to stock firewood have been camouflaged by locals. Additional wood is expected to arrive in the coming weeks, hewn from groves of trees inside the city and from the vast forests of western Ukraine.

One hour’s drive north of Lviv, in a dense wood streaked with yellow sunlight, forestry service workers labored to generate enough firewood to supply a beleaguered nation. On a recent weekday, they cut into a grove of weathered oak trees and trucked them to a sawmill, where a lumberyard half the size of a football field was stacked a meter high with freshly hewn logs.

Firewood sales have doubled from a year ago, and prices have nearly tripled as the country stocks up, said Yuriy Hromyak, vice director of the Lviv Regional Department of Forestry.

Even the forest isn’t sheltered from Russian attacks, he added. Ukrainian forces recently shot down a rocket fired from Belarus on a nearby oil storage facility. The tanks — which were empty — weren’t damaged, but the blast blew out all the windows in a wood storage warehouse and in parts of the sawmill.

“The Russians will do anything to try to destroy us,” he said. “But no one has managed to unite us as much as Putin has.”

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HEADLINE	08/01 Oregon 14 potential heat deaths in hot spell
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/At-least-14-potential-heat-deaths-in-Oregon-after-17344043.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/At-least-14-potential-heat-deaths-in-Oregon-after-17344043.php</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — Oregon authorities are investigating four additional deaths potentially linked to last week’s scorching heat wave, bringing the total number of suspected hyperthermia deaths to 14.</p> <p>The Oregon State Medical Examiner’s Office said Monday the designation of heat-related death is preliminary and requires further investigation.</p>

Multnomah County, which is home to Portland, recorded seven deaths suspected to be related to heat, the highest of any Oregon county.

Portland and Seattle set records Sunday for most consecutive days of high temperatures.

In Portland, temperatures on Sunday rose above 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 Celsius) for the seventh day in a row, a record for the city for consecutive days above that mark. Further north in Seattle, the temperature rose to 91 F (32.8 C) by early afternoon, marking a record six days above 90 F (32.2 C).

Temperatures neared the triple digits nearly all of last week in the Portland area, prompting officials to open emergency overnight shelters and cooling stations.

The National Weather Service issued an excessive heat warning for both the Portland and Seattle regions lasting through late Sunday evening. Temperatures started to cool off on Monday as colder air from the Pacific blows in.

Climate change is fueling longer heat waves in the Pacific Northwest, a region where weeklong heat spells were historically rare, according to climate experts.

Residents and officials in the Northwest have been trying to adjust to the likely reality of longer, hotter heat waves following last summer's deadly "heat dome" weather phenomenon that prompted record temperatures and deaths.

About 800 people died in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia during that heat wave, which hit in late June and early July of 2021. The temperature hit an all-time high of 116 F (46.7 C) in Portland.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 WA expands Covid telehealth options</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/wa-expands-telehealth-options-to-improve-access-to-covid-treatment/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/wa-expands-telehealth-options-to-improve-access-to-covid-treatment/</a>
GIST	<p>Washington residents who test positive for the coronavirus can now get a free telehealth appointment for treatment consultation, regardless of their insurance coverage.</p> <p>Late last week, the state Department of Health launched the new telehealth option as an expansion of the federal government's initiative to increase access to COVID-19 treatments.</p> <p>Antiviral pills authorized to treat COVID — Pfizer's Paxlovid and Merck's molnupiravir — are available by prescription only and should be started within five days of when symptoms begin, according to the Food and Drug Administration.</p> <p>Telehealth appointments via phone or video call to discuss COVID treatments had previously been only available to insured patients who receive care through a provider that offers them, according to the health department. The new program makes these visits available to everyone, regardless of insurance status, with no out-of-pocket costs.</p> <p>"At DOH, we value equity and innovation, and have embraced those values throughout our COVID-19 response," said Dr. Umair Shah, Secretary of Health, in a news release. "Ensuring that we can equitably connect communities with therapeutics is pivotal so that we can continue our mission of reducing unnecessary death from this disease."</p> <p>Statewide, COVID cases have remained relatively flat over the last couple months, with 213 new cases per 100,000 people from July 17 to July 23. Hospitalizations have increased over the same time period and may be plateauing at a seven-day rate of about 10 per 100,000. The death rate has increased, with 80 COVID deaths recorded from June 23 to June 29, the most recent complete data.</p>

In Cowlitz County, COVID cases appear to be slowly decreasing or flattening, with about 141 per 100,000 from July 17 to July 23. In the county and statewide, the number of cases reported is an undercount because not everyone gets tested or reports at-home test results, according to the health department.

Hospitalizations rise and fall from week to week, but overall admissions per month have slowly increased, according to Cowlitz County Health and Human Services. The most recent weekly hospitalization rate is above the state average, at 12.7 per 100,000.

Last month, the county recorded an increase in COVID deaths, with 13 so far in July, up from two in June, according to the county health department.

County health staff plan to get the word out locally about the new free option through the department's website, social media pages and other outreach efforts, said Stefanie Donahue, communications manager.

"We're pleased to see new options for people to access COVID-19 treatments and are hopeful the state's announcement last week helped broaden awareness," she said. "We want people to know COVID-19 treatments are potentially life-saving, particularly for those who are at higher risk of severe disease."

Not everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 needs treatment. Oral antivirals are important for people who are at high risk of hospitalization, including people who are 65 and older, pregnant, or obese, or have chronic medical conditions, as well as those taking immunosuppressant treatments, according to the Department of Health.

People can set up a telehealth appointment through the state's new program at the Department of Health's telehealth webpage at [bit.ly/3cYUIEb](https://bit.ly/3cYUIEb) or by calling the COVID call center at 1-800-525-0127 and pressing #. The call center can set up appointments from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays and state holidays. Telehealth appointments are available in 240 languages through translation services and can be arranged through the call center.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Captain of wrecked WA ferry resigns</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/captain-of-wrecked-fauntleroy-ferry-resigns/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/captain-of-wrecked-fauntleroy-ferry-resigns/</a>
GIST	<p>The captain of the Cathlamet ferry, which <a href="#">veered off course near West Seattle</a> on Thursday and slammed into some pilings, resigned on Monday.</p> <p>The crash did not result in any injuries or hazardous material spills.</p> <p>Washington State Ferries spokesperson Ian Sterling confirmed the captain's resignation Monday, and that the ferryboat was moving much faster than it should have been at that point in the journey. He said the captain, whose name has not been released, was tested for drugs and alcohol and the results were negative. It remained unclear what was happening on the captain's deck that caused the crash. Sterling also could not rule out mechanical error.</p> <p>"It truly is a mystery," Sterling said. "Something went badly wrong there."</p> <p>The Cathlamet left Vashon Island, heading east toward the Fauntleroy dock in West Seattle, Thursday morning around 7:55 a.m. Its approach was normal for most of the journey, according to <a href="#">Marine Tracker</a>, a website that tracks vessels' positions. But as it approached the dock, the ferry lurched south. It went so far off course that the side of the ship facing north hit the southern group of pilings, known as a dolphin.</p> <p>The collision crumpled one corner of the boat, causing the collapse of the outside portion of the passenger deck known as the picklefork. Several cars were damaged in the collision, with one being trapped by metal, where it remains, said Sterling.</p>

Initial estimates of the cost of repairs to the Cathlamet, a 1980s boat that came online as part of the Issaquah class of ferries, is between \$5 million and \$7 million. That number could easily rise as the investigation continues, said Sterling.

Patty Rubstello, assistant secretary of Washington State Ferries, informed staff of the resignation in a message Monday afternoon.

“Safety continues to be our number one priority for both employees and customers, and I’m thankful that in the history of WSF there has never been a fatality due to a collision,” she wrote.

Ferry crew members were notified of the resignation by a notice posted in the employee areas of boats and terminals.

The Coast Guard is leading the federal investigation, along with the National Transportation Safety Board, while WSF runs its own internal investigation. A spokesperson for the Coast Guard said the investigation is in its preliminary stages and did not offer any additional details on the cause of the incident.

“I can tell you they haven’t interviewed my guys yet,” said Dan Twohig, regional representative for the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, whose members aboard the Cathlamet include a mate as well as the captain, whom he declined to name Monday.

“This is a bad accident and nobody got hurt,” Twohig said. “That’s what’s important.”

State lawmakers learned of the resignation in an email blast shortly after 4 p.m. Monday.

It’s another setback for state ferries because of the time and rigor needed to train navigators, when labor is already short, said state Sen. Christine Rolfes, D-Bainbridge Island.

“It’s going to be hard to replace a retiring captain,” she said. As of last fall, the average age of senior masters is 62, and captains, 57.

Promotion from deckhand to captain can take six to 10 years, including classroom training, extra hours alongside experienced navigators, experience as a mate and written exams on Puget Sound topography and sea conditions.

The state ferry system is undertaking a [\\$1 million campaign to recruit more mates and pilots](#) this year. State Sen. Joe Nguyen, a Democrat whose district includes West Seattle and Vashon Island, said he and his district partner, Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon, plan to hold a town hall on the incident.

“This is a lifeline for so many members of our community,” he said.

WSF brought in the Kitsap on Friday to replace the damaged Cathlamet.

The state ferry system is the largest in the U.S. Its more than 70-year history has been a safe one, with relatively few crashes for the number of passages.

But the last two years have been challenging. Crew shortages due to retirements, COVID infections and vaccine-related resignations, have hobbled its ability to provide normal service. Many routes are operating on reduced schedules, including the sailings between Fauntleroy, Vashon Island and Southworth.

Rep. Dave Paul, D-Oak Harbor, said he’s grateful there were no injuries, but that the damaged Cathlamet will be sidelined for months, and “we don’t have a lot of backup ships right now.”

The fleet itself is aging and in need of upgrades. Of WSF’s 21 boats, just 17 are available. Two are always held out for repairs and maintenance and along with the Cathlamet, the Tacoma is damaged. But for now,



said Sterling, the issue of crew shortages supersedes the vessel shortages, meaning the ferry system couldn't run a full schedule even if it had the boats.

After years of underinvestment, the [Legislature this year](#) approved \$350 million for more training and staffing in a 16-year transportation plan, along with \$860 million for four new vessels, \$160 million for more maintenance and \$193 million to begin converting docks and boats to all-electric power.

"If this was not a mechanical failure, you have to look at: Is the training we're providing for our ferry system strong enough?" said Paul.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 California monkeypox state of emergency</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/california-governor-declares-monkeypox-state-of-emergency/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/california-governor-declares-monkeypox-state-of-emergency/</a>
GIST	<p>SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California's governor on Monday declared a state of emergency to speed efforts to combat the monkeypox outbreak, becoming the second state in three days to take the step.</p> <p>Gov. Gavin Newsom said the declaration will help California coordinate a government-wide response, seek more vaccines and lead outreach and education efforts on where people can get treatment and vaccination.</p> <p>"We'll continue to work with the federal government to secure more vaccines, raise awareness about reducing risk, and stand with the LGBTQ community fighting stigmatization," Newsom said in a statement announcing his declaration.</p> <p>Nearly 800 cases of monkeypox have been reported in California, according to state public health officials.</p> <p>The monkeypox virus spreads through prolonged and close skin-to-skin contact, which can include hugging, cuddling and kissing, as well as through the sharing of bedding, towels and clothing. People getting sick so far have mainly been men who have sex with men, though health officials note that the virus can infect anyone.</p> <p>"Public health officials are clear: stigma is unacceptable and counterproductive in public health response," Michelle Gibbons, executive director of the County Health Executives Association of California said in a statement. "The fact is that monkeypox is primarily spread by skin to skin contact and sharing objects like bedding or towels, without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity."</p> <p>The type of monkeypox virus identified in this outbreak is rarely fatal, and people usually recover within weeks. But the lesions and blisters caused by the virus are painful, and they can prevent swallowing or bowel movements if in the throat or anus.</p> <p>The declaration in California came after a similar one in New York state on Saturday, and in San Francisco on Thursday. Newsom's administration had said as recently as Friday that it was too soon for such a declaration.</p> <p>After pressing for Newsom to make such a declaration, Democratic state Sen. Scott Wiener of San Francisco hailed the governor's decision.</p> <p>"The monkeypox outbreak is an emergency, and we need to use every tool we have to control it," Wiener said.</p> <p>Newsom's proclamation allows emergency medical personnel to administer monkeypox vaccines that are approved by the federal government.</p>

That's similar to a recent law that allows pharmacists to administer vaccines, Newsom's administration said. It said the state's response is building on the steps developed during the coronavirus pandemic to set up vaccination clinics and make sure there is outreach to vulnerable populations in cooperation with local and community-based organizations.

California has received more than 61,000 vaccine doses and has distributed more than 25,000 doses.

"We don't have any time to waste," Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger said in a statement. She said the nation's most-populous county must use all available resources to speed the distribution of vaccines and help to those who have been infected.

Newsom's office said Los Angeles County has received a separate allocation of vaccine.

As of last week, the state had expanded its testing capacity to process more than 1,000 tests a week. Critics have said the long wait for test results delayed treatment options.

In San Francisco, Peter Tran was among hundreds who lined up sometimes for hours to receive the monkeypox vaccine at the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital on Monday after the clinic was forced to close last week because it did not receive enough doses.

"It's horrible. Like this is a vaccine that's been out for such a long time. And like, it's not even a deadly disease. It's harder to be transmitted than COVID. But the rollout of the vaccines throughout this nation is absolutely horrible," Tran said.

"I think the science shows that protection is greatly improved with the vaccine. So that's why I'm doing it. And I honestly just don't want the lesions on my body. I heard the lesions are painful and leave scarring. So I think that's another motivation to go out and get it."

Before making their own emergency declaration last week, San Francisco city officials were criticized for not responding rapidly enough to the outbreak. They, in turn, faulted the federal government for failing to deliver enough vaccines. The city received about 4,000 doses on Friday, enabling it to restart vaccinations, and hopes to administer them by mid-week, said Dr. Lukejohn Day, chief medical officer at the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital.

The city had 305 cases as of Monday, he said.

The World Health Organization has declared the monkeypox outbreak in more than 70 countries a global emergency.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Wildfire burns near Vantage in Kittitas Co.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wildfire/wildfire-vantage-washington-evacuation-notice/293-d5070011-d36a-4bae-ad3c-99acf24e0959?ref=exit-recirc">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wildfire/wildfire-vantage-washington-evacuation-notice/293-d5070011-d36a-4bae-ad3c-99acf24e0959?ref=exit-recirc</a>
GIST	<p>VANTAGE, Wash. — A wildfire near Vantage Highway in Kittitas County has burned 5,000 acres, according to the <a href="#">Central Washington Interagency Communications Center</a>. The sheriff's office has issued a Level 3 evacuation advisory for Lakeview Drive, Columbia Avenue and Brown Street at Vantage.</p> <p>A brush fire and strong winds sparked the wildfire at 12:05 p.m. on Monday.</p> <p>Vantage Highway is currently closed from No. 81 Road (Ellensburg) to Recreation Drive (Vantage). Sections of I-90 West have also been closed Monday as the flames spread.</p> <p>A Level 2 evacuation notice means "there is a fire in the area that may threaten your safety and the safety of your family," according to <a href="#">Kittitas County Emergency Management</a>.</p>

HEADLINE	08/01 Snohomish Co. food banks force to ration
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/everett/snohomish-county-food-banks-rationing/281-5fcd08e6-6a1c-4824-8a70-03fad3aa1e53">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/everett/snohomish-county-food-banks-rationing/281-5fcd08e6-6a1c-4824-8a70-03fad3aa1e53</a>
GIST	<p>EVERETT, Wash. — Workers at <a href="#">Volunteers of America's Everett food bank</a> said they've never seen the shelves so empty.</p> <p>They thought the need was great at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now it's even worse.</p> <p>Volunteers of America Western Washington provides food to 17 food banks across Snohomish County. Since April, demand has exploded 138% and the food is starting to run out.</p> <p>The organization is being forced to ration food for the first time ever.</p> <p>"You should consider this watermark a scary one, all things considered," said the organization's Vice President of community engagement Steve Woodard.</p> <p>A food bank is the last place Beverly Brown ever thought she'd end up. However, after losing her home, here she is.</p> <p>"Here I am so I guess I am living it. I can't imagine I'm here," Brown said, half laughing and half crying. "My name is Beverly and I'm homeless because a fire destroyed my home."</p> <p>Brown is one of the many now being greeted with bad news as they sign up for free food. For the foreseeable future, clients can no longer get food every week. They can only come two times per month.</p> <p>"Oh, gosh. My heart is heavy," said volunteer Wendy McCoard. "This food is a lifesaver for people."</p> <p>Inflation is the driving factor. Nationwide, the cost of meat rose more than 8% in June. Bread jumped nearly 11%. Canned vegetables skyrocketed more than 14%.</p> <p>At the same time, children are out of school and not receiving free lunches. Hundreds of <a href="#">Ukrainian refugees</a> are arriving in Snohomish County. Government pandemic funds are running out, as is people's willingness to give.</p> <p>Volunteers of America is growing desperate.</p> <p>"This system has always relied upon the goodwill and nature and action of our residents, and folks recognizing that I have a connection to you even if I don't know you. It's important that I support you and your family because you're part of our community," said Woodard.</p> <p>That community consists of people like Beverly Brown, who is now forced to rely on the food bank to feed her family.</p> <p>She worries that her fragile safety net is in danger of coming apart, too.</p> <p>"I mean, honestly, I don't know what I would be doing without these people," she said.</p> <p>Federal forecasters don't expect food prices or the need for food to drop anytime soon.</p>
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HEADLINE	08/01 Remote work? Return to office battles
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/business/return-to-office-battles.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/business/return-to-office-battles.html</a>

The competition for parking space is getting steeper. Commutes are inching longer. Workplace lounges are filling up with commotion as junior associates play cornhole. What return-to-office debate? In some parts of the country, it's been settled.

"I know almost nobody in Columbus who is fully remote," said Grant Blosser, 35, who works at a financial services firm.

In October 2020, Mr. Blosser started going back into his office in Columbus, Ohio, five days a week. He cracked jokes with the young analysts, one of whom recently dragged his team to hot yoga (it "kicked our butts"). He listened to his book club's selection in the car (currently, a biography of Winston Churchill). It was a relief, he said, to feel the "separation of church and state" that came from leaving the house each day.

"Almost everybody I know is in an office most of the time here," he said. "The headlines that I read about as far as people dragging their feet going back to the office are about select companies and select cities."

More than two years into the pandemic, American corporate workplaces have splintered. Some are nearly as full as they were before Covid-19 struck; others sit abandoned, printers switched off and Keurig cups collecting dust. Workers in America's midsize and small cities have returned to the office in far greater numbers than those in the biggest U.S. cities. Some executives in large cities are hoping they'll catch up, though they've been impeded by safety and health concerns about mass transit commutes, as well as competitive job markets where employees are more likely to call the shots.

In small cities — those with populations under 300,000 — the share of paid, full days worked from home dropped to 27 percent this spring from around 42 percent in October 2020. In the 10 largest U.S. cities, days worked from home shifted to roughly 38 percent from 50 percent in that same period, according to a team of researchers at Stanford and other institutions led by the economists Steven Davis, Nick Bloom and Jose Maria Barrero.

Offices have filled back up fastest in areas where Covid lockdowns were shortest and where commutes are done by car, according to Mr. Davis. Many cities in California and New York, in particular, have been slower to return to the office than those in Florida and Texas.

"'Strange' is one word. 'Jealousy' is also one," said Bret Hairston, an office worker in Columbus, describing her feelings about going into an office regularly while she knew many people were not.

While some company executives have found themselves embroiled in tense discussion about the future of the office, others are adamant that, at least for them, the debate is resolved. "In some ways, it's a non-story," said Matt Lanter, 33, the co-founder of OpenStore, an e-commerce company in Miami whose 100 workers are in the office full time. "There's nothing really to talk about because people have literally been in the office for the last one to two years."

It's not that civic leaders everywhere don't want people back. It's just that their pitches are getting mixed results. "Downtown is back," Andrew Ginther, the mayor of Columbus, said this spring. "Back to work, back to fun." Mayor Eric Adams told New Yorkers, "You can't stay home in your pajamas." Yet many of them have.

The regional gap in return-to-office patterns is discernible in the share of online job postings that permit remote work. In San Francisco, 26 percent of job postings now allow for remote work, and, in New York, 19 percent do. In Columbus, just 13 percent of job postings permit remote work; in Houston, the number is 12.6 percent; and in Birmingham, Ala., it is just 10.4 percent, according to another team of researchers led by Mr. Davis, Mr. Bloom and Raffaella Sadun of Harvard Business School.

Some workers are straddling the line between these two Americas. Ann Aly, who several years ago moved back from Alexandria, Va., to her hometown near Fort Myers, Fla., is the only person she knows there who works remotely. She avoids driving anywhere between 7 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. because the waves of

commuters make for interminable traffic. In the afternoons, she stops by the grocery store where she used to be a cashier, taking advantage of the short lines while others are at work.

“A lot of people don’t really understand how that works: How do you work remote? What do you do? And how do you not just take a nap in the middle of the day?” said Ms. Aly, who works in tech. “I don’t really talk about it with neighbors unless they ask because I don’t necessarily want to highlight those social differences.”

Americans have always experienced the workplace in starkly different ways: Doctors spend long shifts on their feet, truckers on the road and knowledge workers hunched over computers. But now, even people within the same profession can have vastly different work arrangements depending on where their desks sit.

Gabe Tucker, 26, is a lawyer with Fortif Law Partners in Birmingham, where the share of job listings that permit remote work is roughly half that of New York’s. Each morning, Mr. Tucker puts on a button-down shirt, drives for 15 minutes and arrives at the office around 8 a.m. His routine, in other words, remains identical to the one he had before the pandemic began (with the exception of no longer having to wear a tie). In the evenings, he and his colleagues sometimes make a toast to celebrate the closing of a deal. They’ve been back in the office since June 2020, with masks and other Covid precautions.

“It’s work like normal, pretty much,” Mr. Tucker said. “We found it difficult to be working remotely. We all enjoy being around each other.”

San Francisco’s office occupancy is at 39 percent of its prepandemic level, and New York’s is at 41 percent, according to data from the building security firm Kastle. Austin, Texas, meanwhile, is at nearly 60 percent. Then there’s the Huntington Center, a 37-story office tower in downtown Columbus, which now has about 85 percent of its prepandemic occupants on site at some point during the week, according to Hines, the company that manages the building.

Traci Martinez, the office managing partner at Squire Patton Boggs, a law firm with offices on the 20th floor of the Huntington Center, said somebody coming from San Francisco might walk into her office and marvel at the buzz.

“They would come into our building and be like, ‘Wow, this is just normal,’” said Ms. Martinez, 45.

She has a front-row view of the disparities in office returns nationwide. She coordinates with managers in the firm’s numerous offices, and has found that its Ohio locations have filled up faster than many others, particularly its Washington, D.C., location.

One recent Monday morning found Ms. Martinez and her assistant chuckling as they debriefed a dinner party they had hosted two days earlier for 45 of the firm’s lawyers.

Since May 2020, Ms. Martinez had been back in the office five days a week — for her, it felt like remote work never really existed. “My husband will tell you I only lasted 10 days,” she said. “I just feel better when I’m in the office.”

She watches as she is being joined by more and more people: Commuters used to have their pick of parking spots, but now there is more competition. Robert Tannous, a lawyer who works in the building, said the time of his commute had gone up by at least five minutes because of increased traffic. Even lesser holidays draw crowds into common areas around the building. Porter Wright Morris & Arthur, another law firm in the Huntington Center, celebrated Pi Day not long ago by handing out cream-and-berry pies to its staff members.

Some executives argue that zeal over returning to the office can build on itself, with occupants begetting more occupants. It is difficult to feel motivated to take on a commute when the destination is an

abandoned workplace. When workers know they'll see their teammates, the hassle of leaving home is easier to justify.

"People talk, and it's like, 'Oh, yeah, we're all going to the office,'" said Mike Shebat, 30, the chief executive of Traba, an online labor marketplace whose 27 employees are in the office in Miami five days a week. "Sometimes even six days a week just because people want to come in on the weekends," he said. "We have snacks here. It's really good internet."

Recruiters said these regional differences in office attendance and flexible work are making for a bumpier job market. Andy Challenger, the head of sales and media at the job search firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, said he had to be newly attuned to a client's location. He tends to warn job candidates in Texas that they should be prepared to work from an office, while he tells job candidates in California that they are more likely to be able to work from home. Applicants interested in leadership roles might have to be prepared to take the lead on return-to-office plans by showing up every day.

Design and human resources firms are also wrestling with a newly complicated assortment of client needs. For example, managers at Gensler, the architecture and design firm, have to ask clients how much they intend to use their physical offices so that designers know whether to create a retreat-like environment or a typical corporate space.

"There's always been dramatic differences in what people's work lives looked like, but where they were consistent was with professional service workers," said Joe Du Bey, who runs Eden, a company that makes human resources software. "Now we're seeing this dramatic divergence of work experience for information workers."

Some researchers worry that different expectations about workplace flexibility make for one more way that people's lives have become polarized during the pandemic.

"One of the things that tethers us is having to go into work," said Mr. Bloom, a professor at Stanford who studies hybrid work, explaining that for some people workplaces no longer serve as a social anchor. "Half the country has a different experience than the other."

Mr. Bloom argues that the disparities in work experiences mean that people have less exposure to colleagues of different backgrounds, noting the mix of political perspectives in his own workplace. "If you say, 'We're going to allow a bunch of folks to fully work from home,' they're no longer exposed to the guy on the other side of the table," he said.

To the segment of the country that is fully back at the table with teammates, the debates being waged in other cities — over postponed office-return dates and permanent work-from-home arrangements — can feel distant.

"We don't officially take attendance or anything, but yesterday I actually did walk around and count everyone just because I was like, gosh, this place is really, really full," said Bill Nolan, 60, the office managing partner in Columbus of the law firm Barnes & Thornburg, which is on the Huntington Center's 33rd floor. "You certainly don't have any sense that it's some ghost town."

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HEADLINE	08/01 UN peacekeepers in Congo fire at crossing
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/africa/congo-un-peacekeepers-kill-2.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/africa/congo-un-peacekeepers-kill-2.html</a>
GIST	KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of Congo — United Nations peacekeepers opened fire at a border crossing in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Sunday, U.N. and Congolese authorities said, killing two people and injuring 15 others in a spasm of violence that punctuated weeks of tensions over the agency's role in Africa's second-largest nation.



Local [protesters have recently escalated their calls for United Nations forces to leave the region](#), saying the soldiers have failed to protect civilians against an alarming surge of violence carried out by an array of militant groups. The killings on Sunday come just days after at least 19 people, including three U.N. peacekeepers, were killed and 60 others injured, in demonstrations against the peacekeeping mission in the cities of Butembo and Goma.

On Sunday, a U.N. peacekeeping brigade returning from leave opened fire at the border post in Kasindi town, in the North Kivu Province along the border with Uganda, Bintou Keita, the head of the U.N. mission in Congo, [said in a statement](#). Ms. Keita said the force opened fire for “unexplained reasons and forced their way through” the border crossing causing “loss of life and serious injuries.”

Ms. Keita added that she was “deeply shocked and dismayed,” and said the suspected perpetrators had been identified and arrested pending an investigation being done in collaboration with Congolese authorities. While she did not identify what nations the peacekeepers came from, she said that their countries had been informed so that legal proceedings could begin.

António Guterres, the U.N. secretary general, said he was “outraged” and “saddened” by the events and welcomed the decision to detain the peacekeeping officers, according to a [statement](#) by the deputy U.N. spokesman, Farhan Haq. Patrick Muyaya, a Congolese government spokesman, also condemned the killings in a statement.

Some government officials and the youth wing of the ruling party have been behind calls for anti-U.N. protests. Though some observers say that is partly to deflect from the government’s own shortcomings ahead of elections next year, a number of civil society groups have also [supported calls for the departure of the U.N. mission](#).

Opposition to the U.N. presence has grown as [violence has resurged in eastern Congo](#), where at least 120 militant groups are operating in the lush, mineral-rich region, according to the [Kivu Security Tracker](#), which maps violence in the region.

Armed groups, including the Allied Democratic Forces, or A.D.F., and the March 23 Movement, or M23, have carried out [a wave of violence](#) since late last year that has left hundreds [dead and injured](#) and more than 160,000 displaced.

In late June, Ms. Keita [told the Security Council](#) that groups like the M23 were “behaving increasingly like a conventional army, with sophisticated firepower and equipment” — threatening not just civilians and peacekeepers but the stability of the country’s eastern regions.

Congo has accused neighboring [Rwanda of backing the M23](#), leading to cross-border shelling and a diplomatic standoff between the two nations. Congo also [joined arms with Uganda](#) last year to target the A.D.F., after Uganda accused it of conducting a series of bombings in the capital, Kampala.

Officially known as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, or MONUSCO, the current peacekeeping effort was authorized in 2010 by the Security Council to help safeguard civilians, deter armed groups and collaborate with the government in peace efforts. With a budget of over \$1 billion, the mission had 12,835 uniformed personnel as of June, with troops and military members drawn from at least 10 countries, including India, Morocco, Nepal, South Africa and Uruguay, the U.N. said.

The deadly protests last week drew concern from the United States, with State Department spokesman Ned Price [calling](#) on authorities “to ensure the protection of MONUSCO sites and personnel and for protesters to express their sentiments peacefully.”

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken will [travel to Congo](#) next week and meet with senior Congolese officials to discuss a number of issues, including fostering peace in eastern Congo and the wider Great Lakes region.

	<p>The killings on Sunday came just a day after Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the U.N. under-secretary-general for peace operations, arrived in Congo and met with officials including President Félix Tshisekedi and Prime Minister Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde. Mr. Lacroix said the discussions centered on strengthening cooperation with the government and shedding further light on the tensions. On Monday, he <a href="#">participated</a> in an event in the eastern city of Goma city honoring the slain U.N. peacekeepers.</p> <p>His arrival did not assuage Congolese officials and civilians, with some protesters hitting the streets in Beni territory in North Kivu Province. Francine Muyumba, a senator, also condemned Sunday's shootings, saying the U.N. forces <a href="#">behaved</a> "like an executioner" instead of protecting civilians.</p> <p>"This is a systematic attack against a civilian population which is a crime against humanity," she <a href="#">wrote in a post on Twitter</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/31 Libya town searches for justice, bodies</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/31/world/middleeast/tarhuna-libya-graves.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/31/world/middleeast/tarhuna-libya-graves.html</a>
GIST	<p>TARHUNA, Libya — It is hard to find a starker illustration of the failures of Libya's political leaders than Tarhuna, a town set between the Mediterranean coast and the desert where seven brothers from the Kani family and their militiamen detained, tortured and killed hundreds of residents in a five-year reign of terror.</p> <p>Two years after their grip was broken, Tarhuna is still searching for bodies. The rolling groves that produce its famous olive oil now hide mass graves. Some families are missing half a dozen members or more. Others say they learned their relatives' fate from ex-prisoners or other witnesses: an uncle thrown to the Kani brothers' pet lions; a cousin buried alive.</p> <p>Clothing still litters the ground outside a sunbaked makeshift prison where the brothers' militia kept prisoners in oven-like cabinets that just fit a man crouching.</p> <p>"We will move on when we have justice and they pay for their crimes," said Kalthoum el-Hebshi, the retired head of a nursing school in Tarhuna. "Until then, there won't be reconciliation," she added. "When you say to me, 'make peace,' how can I make peace with someone with blood on his hands? How can I shake his hand?"</p> <p>After more than a <a href="#">year of brittle stability</a>, Libya is again tipping toward the chaos that shattered it after rebels <a href="#">overthrew</a> Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi, the dictator of more than 40 years, in the 2011 Arab Spring uprising. The upheaval left this North African country split in half, east and west, carved up by two rival governments and dozens of rival militias that operate above the law.</p> <p>Last year, a period of relative peace offered a snatch of hope. Elections scheduled for December were supposed to produce a government that could reunify Libya's long-divided institutions, shepherd in a constitution, <a href="#">disarm the militias</a> and expel foreign fighters. But disagreements over candidate eligibility <a href="#">scuttled the vote</a>, pitching a country on Europe's doorstep into a new phase of uncertainty.</p> <p>More than seven months later, Libya is again split between rival leaders, <a href="#">neither working toward elections</a>. Their <a href="#">struggle for primacy</a>, and for control of Libya's oil wealth, has sparked <a href="#">deadly clashes</a> in Tripoli, the capital, warped everyday life and dented oil production, the country's economic lifeblood.</p> <p>The shambles has also made justice elusive in Tarhuna, where leaders on both sides of Libya's divide are implicated in the Kanis' rise.</p> <p>"Everyone on the scene only looks out for their own interests," said Hamza el-Kanouni, 39, whose uncle was killed by the Kanis and whose cousin was held in a Kani prison for three months. "They don't even see Libya."</p>

The brothers left behind graves that hold hundreds of bodies, according to a United Nations panel that recently identified several new burial sites in Tarhuna. Libyan investigators said they had found nearly 250 bodies so far, and identified about 60 percent.

But 470 families have reported missing relatives, so the toll is almost certainly much higher, according to Kamal Abubaker, a DNA specialist who oversees the search-and-identify effort.

Ms. el-Hebshi, the retired nursing school head, said her eldest son was kidnapped in 2011 for supporting the anti-Qaddafi rebels. Her brother disappeared in the uprising's aftermath, and her second son was kidnapped by the Kanis.

No bodies were ever found, and she continues to hope against hope, she said, that they will turn up alive in some distant prison.

The Kanis' murderous streak began amid the 2011 revolt, when they exploited the anarchy to settle scores against rivals and entrench themselves in Tarhuna, a town of about 70,000 people. They built their power and wealth through smuggling and extortion, residents said.

By 2016, they had allied with the internationally backed government in Tripoli, which paid them to run security. Three years later, a new civil war broke out as Khalifa Hifter, eastern Libya's leader, mounted an assault on Tripoli.

The Kanis switched to Mr. Hifter's camp. But all the while, whichever side they were on, the killings continued, residents said.

When the Tripoli government's forces defeated Mr. Hifter with Turkish backing in 2020, they expelled the Kanis from Tarhuna.

Now the town wants justice.

But government in Libya is paralyzed. After funding cuts, the effort to uncover and identify Tarhuna's dead is almost at a standstill. The country is not divided by religion or ideology. But a host of other obstacles impede progress: the intervention of foreign powers including Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Egypt, which prize Libya for its strategic location and oil reserves; the need to reconcile east and west after the recent fighting; and political leaders who show little interest in resolving the crisis unless it benefits them.

"Right now, there's no clear way forward other than continued stalemate and instability," said Wolfram Lacher, a Libya expert at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. "Everything is total opportunism. It's only about carving up the positions and the funds."

With United Nations-brokered negotiations in Cairo and Geneva earlier this year failing to make progress, Libya [has two rival prime ministers](#): the western-based Abdul Hamid Dbeiba and the eastern-based Fathi Bashagha, handpicked by Mr. Hifter.

Mr. Hifter is widely reviled in western Libya for his Tripoli offensive, during which Libyans accused him of bombing residential neighborhoods and torturing and killing civilians. A U.S. federal judge handed down a default judgment against him on Friday after he repeatedly skipped depositions for a federal lawsuit in which Libyan plaintiffs accused him of war crimes.

But many Libyans reject both the eastern and western leaders.

"We don't want anyone who came before," said Anwar Sawon, a local leader from the city of Misurata who fought in the 2011 uprising. "We just want new faces. People who just want to serve the people."

After a year in which many residents of Tripoli had become accustomed to safe, well-kept roads with working streetlights, basic services are on the fritz again.

Hundreds of people across the country [recently protested](#) the deteriorating situation, torching part of the eastern-based Parliament's headquarters out of disgust with power cuts that last as long as 18 hours and self-interested politicians.

"The people's demands are very small, just the basics: no more power cuts, food being available," said Halima Ahmed, 30, a law lecturer at the University of Sabha in Libya's southern desert. "Our dream during the revolution was, we wanted to be like Dubai. Now we just want stability."

After the Kanis' fall in Tarhuna, some 16,000 people fled, including Kani supporters, militiamen and the five Kani brothers who survived the outbreak of fighting that surrounded the assault on Tripoli.

Now many of them want to return.

In the absence of help from national leaders, an informal group of tribal elders from across the country has stepped in to help resettle the exiles. It is part of their longtime work mediating disputes: tribal clashes over property lines that mushroom into kidnappings and murders; personal spats that set off a cycle of killings.

Elders from tribes with no connection to either party hear both sides, assign responsibility and broker an agreement, which can involve compensation, formal apologies and vows not to relapse.

Nothing is legally binding, but the settlements are usually honored out of respect for the mediators. Those who break their word, mediators say, are excluded from the unwritten pact that governs much of Libyan society: The next time they are involved in a dispute, no one will intercede.

The Tarhuna victims do not see the reconciliations as a substitute for a functioning justice system. Some of them said they had tried repeatedly to approach the police because they did not want to resort to revenge killings, but officials did nothing.

In a country where those with power, money and weapons answer to no one, however, the mediators are all they have.

"We don't have the law in our hands. The only thing we can do is give our word of honor," said Ali Agouri, 68, a tribal representative who has worked on reconciliation in Tarhuna. "There's no state, but the people want justice."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Erosion public trust mounting for FBI</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/1/erosion-public-trust-mounting-fbi-allegations-part/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/1/erosion-public-trust-mounting-fbi-allegations-part/</a>
GIST	<p>Sen. Charles E. Grassley's allegation of partisan interference by top FBI officials in the Hunter Biden probe is the latest crisis of credibility for the nation's premier law enforcement agency, making its job of collaring crooks that much more difficult.</p> <p>The accusation comes in the middle of what has already been an embarrassing summer for the storied bureau, which has been struggling to shake off complaints of political bias since the 2016 presidential election.</p> <p>In May, the criminal trial of former Hillary Clinton campaign lawyer Michael Sussmann laid bare multiple screwups and subterfuge by FBI officials probing alleged links between Russians who interfered in the 2016 election and members of President Trump's campaign.</p>

Former FBI agents said they fear the bureau's woes will seep into its critical terrorism and organized crime investigations. They worry that informants will be less willing to come forward, or that jurors may not give an agent testifying at trial the same expectation of truth they once would have.

"There is no greater backbone for any law enforcement organization than having the trust of the American people," said Lewis Schiliro, a former head of the agency's New York office. "It's through the trust of the people that you get cooperation from witnesses and victims, the credibility to testify on the witness stand, and even the ability to infiltrate terrorist organizations."

FBI Director Christopher A. Wray will get a chance to explain himself on Thursday, when he's scheduled to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee. The FBI did not respond to multiple requests for comment by The Washington Times about its loss of public trust.

A Rasmussen poll released earlier this year shows public support for the FBI has plunged. The survey found that 47% of likely U.S. voters have an unfavorable view of the bureau, including 26% who have a "very unfavorable" impression.

About 46% of respondents said they had a favorable view of the FBI, down from 60% in the same survey in May 2020.

Another 46% of voters who participated in the poll said they view the FBI as President Biden's "personal Gestapo," and 50% said the FBI is influenced by the president.

That lack of confidence is reflected in jury rooms across the country. The number of convictions in FBI-led investigations has dropped by 4% over the past five years, and 14% over the past 10 years, according to data from Syracuse University.

Kevin Brock, a former FBI assistant director of intelligence, said the erosion of public trust is the "inevitable legacy" of former FBI Director James B. Comey and Deputy Director Andrew McCabe. He said accusations that they mishandled the Trump-Russia probe and the investigation into Mrs. Clinton's use of a private email server have given rise to public suspicion of the bureau on both sides of the political spectrum.

"These allegations [of political taint] are going to persist and will hurt the FBI because they will lose the trust of the American people," he said. "They've already lost a large swath of the American people."

The allegations raised against the bureau this summer have revived complaints of top bureau officials' partisan ties and other embarrassments from the Trump era.

Mr. Grassley, Iowa Republican, revealed last week FBI whistleblowers told lawmakers that FBI officials inaccurately labeled verified evidence in the Hunter Biden case as disinformation, grinding the probe to a halt.

The stunning allegations were brought to Mr. Grassley by current and former "highly credible whistleblowers" within the FBI, who said agents conspired to discredit the probe against the president's son.

The agent in charge of the probe, Timothy Thibault, also has come under fire for alleged partisan social media posts, including retweeting anti-Trump groups and criticizing Republicans.

GOP lawmakers are in an uproar over the allegations. Sen. Ron Johnson, Wisconsin Republican, accused the FBI on Sunday of extreme political bias and accused Mr. Wray — who was appointed by Mr. Trump — of slow-walking the Hunter Biden investigation.

"I'm not shocked, but it's outrageous the FBI would be tipping the scales of justice the way they're doing," he said in a Fox News interview.

“I have no faith in Christopher Wray conducting this investigation, but it’s important that the American public understand the FBI had Hunter Biden’s laptop in December 2019. They certainly saw the evidence of what I think is criminal activity on that laptop,” Mr. Johnson said.

Mr. Johnson also suggested that the FBI has obstructed Senate Republicans’ 2020 probe into Hunter Biden’s foreign business dealings.

The latest allegations follow two weeks of humiliating testimony in the trial of Mr. Sussmann, who was acquitted in May of lying to the FBI about his ties to the Clinton campaign when he offered up a false tip about the Trump Organization’s ties to Russia.

It came out during the trial that FBI leaders concealed from field agents that the probe was spurred by information provided by the Clinton campaign. An agent testified that a “typo” led other agents to believe the anti-Trump allegations were based on a referral from the Justice Department, not from a Clinton campaign lawyer.

That same agent also testified under oath that he’s under an internal FBI investigation for withholding key evidence in the Trump-Russia probe.

As the bureau tries to navigate away from political scandal, a series of self-inflicted wounds have emerged, raising questions of competency.

A group of 90 women, including several U.S. Olympic team gymnasts, has filed a \$1 billion lawsuit against the FBI for its botched investigation into former Team USA doctor Larry Nassar, allowing him to continue to sexually abuse them.

The Justice Department released a report that found USA Gymnastics contacted the FBI twice about Nassar, but the FBI did not take any action. Nassar abused about 70 women and girls between the time the FBI was first told of the allegations in July 2015 and December 2016, when he was finally arrested.

The FBI has also come under fire for failing to follow up on a tip about mass shooter Nikolas Cruz in 2018. Roughly six weeks after the tip, Cruz fatally shot 17 students and injured more in a massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

Last year, prosecutors charged FBI agent Eduardo Valdivia with attempted second-degree murder for a December shooting onboard a Washington Metro train, after a five-month investigation by Montgomery County State’s Attorney John McCarthy. Mr. Valdivia has pleaded not guilty, and the case is still pending.

A Justice Department inspector general’s report this month found two FBI officials “engaged in unprofessional conduct by exhibiting favoritism in granting promotions.”

“It’s not helping,” Mr. Brock said of the recent spate of black eyes for the bureau. “Parkland was a horrible FBI breakdown in processes, and the gymnast case was a real failure on the part of the FBI. Those things might have less of an impact a few years ago as isolated mistakes, but in this environment, everything the FBI does is now being amplified by both sides of the political spectrum for leverage.”

The former agents said it will take major overhauls to win back the public’s confidence.

Mr. Brock called on the FBI brass to be more transparent in politically tinged cases to prevent second-guessing and figure-pointing by lawmakers and the public.

He said the bureau should acknowledge when agents are working on major cases like the Hunter Biden probe and make a public pledge to rigorously document that bureau procedures were followed. He said increasing transparency is a high-wire act, because the bureau needs to keep mum about witnesses and evidence, but it will pay off in the long run.



	<p>“No one is saying increasing transparency is easy, but the risk is that there will be a substantial loss in confidence, and the FBI will become ineffective,” he said.</p> <p>Mr. Schiliro said Congress should stop making the FBI director a politically appointed position and instead have the person appointed by a bipartisan panel for a 10-year term.</p> <p>“As long as we have politically appointed FBI directors, their loyalty becomes more political than to the FBI as an institution. It needs to be independent,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Russia redeploys troops in Ukraine to south</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-redeploys-troops-in-ukraine-as-focus-of-conflict-turns-south-11659352602?mod=hp_lead_pos7">https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-redeploys-troops-in-ukraine-as-focus-of-conflict-turns-south-11659352602?mod=hp_lead_pos7</a>
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine—Russia is repositioning troops to strengthen its hand in southern Ukraine, shifting forces from the front line in northern Donbas, according to the Ukrainian and British militaries, ahead of a <a href="#">planned Ukrainian offensive in the south</a>.</p> <p>Ukraine’s southern command said Russian battle groups were being deployed near Kryvyi Rih and Zaporizhzhia, southern Ukrainian cities that lie to the north of territory fully controlled by Moscow.</p> <p>“Now the Russian army is trying to strengthen its positions in the occupied areas of the south of our country, increasing activity in the relevant areas,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in an overnight address.</p> <p>The U.K.’s Defense Ministry said Russia was reallocating a significant number of troops and likely adjusting its Donbas offensive after failing to make a decisive breakthrough under a plan Moscow has followed since April. “It has likely identified its Zaporizhzhia front as a vulnerable area in need of reinforcement,” the U.K. Defense Ministry said Monday.</p> <p>Russia’s Defense Ministry didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>After months of Russian forces making slow gains in Ukraine’s east, the focus of the war is moving south.</p> <p>Ukraine has used long-range artillery and rocket systems, including <a href="#">U.S.-supplied M142 Himars</a>, to halt Russia’s advances in the east, and apparently limit Moscow’s ability to supply its front lines. Now, with the help of these Western weapons, Ukraine says it is mounting a counteroffensive to take back the southern port city of Kherson, the largest population center occupied by the Russians and the first city to fall.</p> <p>On Monday, Ukraine’s defense minister said four additional Himars had arrived in the country and thanked President Biden and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin for strengthening the Ukrainian army. “We have proven to be smart operators of this weapon,” Oleksii Reznikov wrote <a href="#">on Twitter</a>.</p> <p>Russia on Monday continued to shell positions around the regions of Donetsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia, the Ukrainian military said, areas that have been under attack for months.</p> <p>Meanwhile, <a href="#">Ukraine dispatched its first</a> grain shipment since the start of Russia’s invasion on Monday, under a deal aimed at easing global food shortages.</p> <p>The ship departed the Odessa port carrying 26,000 metric tons of corn headed for Tripoli, Lebanon, according to Ukrainian and Russian officials and the Turkish government, which helped broker the deal. The Sierra Leone-flagged bulk carrier, the Razoni, is expected to arrive in Istanbul on Tuesday, and then continue on its course following inspections.</p>

The shipment is the first test for [a deal agreed last month](#) to allow Ukraine, one of the world's largest grain exporters, to begin shipping some 18 million metric tons that Russia's invasion in February has trapped in the country. Senior Ukrainian officials have expressed doubt as to whether Russia will uphold its end of the deal. [Russian missiles struck](#) the port of Odessa on July 23, just hours after officials from all four parties signed the agreement in Istanbul. Russian officials said the strike targeted military infrastructure.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Monday that the first ship carrying agricultural products traveled via a humanitarian corridor agreed between Russia and Ukraine and that Russian officers took part in the planning.

Also Monday, Ukraine's General Staff said it had detected the deployment of radar systems across its border with Belarus, a Russian ally that has served as an important staging ground and supply point for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Russia moved some troops into Belarus during its military buildup ahead of the invasion in February, but Belarusian forces so far haven't entered the conflict.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said localized ground attacks [near Izyum, a city in eastern Ukraine](#), could be setting the stage for a renewed Russian offensive toward Kharkiv, but added that it was very unlikely they would be able to capture the city, which is Ukraine's second-most populous. "Russian forces may also be conducting spoiling attacks to prevent Ukrainian counteroffensives," the institute said in its latest update Sunday.

Russia unleashed some of the most brutal barrages of the war on Ukraine's southern port city of Mykolaiv on Sunday, [killing among others the owner](#) of one of the nation's leading agricultural companies.

Mykolaiv, a strategic city that Russia tried but failed to seize in the first weeks of the war, has been repeatedly targeted by Russian Smerch and Uragan missiles and long-range artillery in recent weeks, with a strike using cluster munitions on Friday killing nine people at a busy bus stop.

Sunday's predawn barrages, which lasted hours, damaged a hotel, a sports facility, two schools, a car-repair workshop and several housing blocks, causing fires in the city, the regional administration said. "Mykolaiv suffered a massive artillery strike—perhaps the biggest ever," Mayor Oleksandr Senkevich said on social media.

Mr. Senkevich said Monday that Russia shelled a trauma center.

"The shock wave and debris also blew out windows in the nearby medical departments," he wrote on social media, noting that there were no casualties. "It was the first medical institution building built in the last 20 years in Mykolaiv. And it was one of the most modern trauma centers in Ukraine. We will rebuild!"

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Rising temps hit restaurant workers hard</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/food/2022/08/01/heat-restaurant-workers-osh/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/food/2022/08/01/heat-restaurant-workers-osh/</a>
GIST	<p>Not counting his long hiatus during the pandemic, Arcie Walker has been cooking rib-eye and T-bone steaks at the Hoffbrau steakhouse in Austin for 40-some years. His flat top grill is set to 450 degrees, and owner Mary Gail Hamby Ray swears that the temperature in that corner of her tiny restaurant isn't much lower given that the AC system, even on its good days, is no match against the Texas heat.</p> <p>But Walker is no hothouse flower. He has watched over the grill virtually without incident, even in those punishing years before Hamby Ray installed air conditioning in 2002. The cook can recall just one time, years ago, when he suffered something close to heat exhaustion. He had to sit in his car and blast the AC. But Walker will turn 72 in September, and the heat affects him differently now. After an eight-hour shift, he feels depleted. "My body can't handle it like it used to," he says.</p>

Which helps explain why Hamby Ray went with the nuclear option at the end of May. She decided to [close the Hoffbrau for the summer](#). Between the rising temperatures outside, the difficulty of cooling the air inside the historic building and the age of her small staff, all of whom qualify for AARP cards, the owner couldn't justify subjecting either employee or customer to the conditions inside the Hoffbrau.

"The last two weekends we were there in May, it was already getting so hot that I tried to keep a real close eye on him," Hamby Ray says about her veteran cook. "I don't want to look over there and find him passed out on the floor."

Extreme heat, driven by climate change, has affected large parts of the United States this summer, leading to more droughts, wildfires, floods and triple-digit temperatures, all of which threaten the environment and the economy. But workers, particularly those who work outdoors or in high-heat environments inside, have seen their risks rise along with the mercury.

The seven hottest years on record, according to scientists, [have occurred in the last seven years](#), and the number of annual heat waves has [tripled since the 1960s](#). One [recent study](#) associated extreme heat with a higher overall death rate among adult Americans.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [344 workers died](#) because of environmental heat exposure from 2011 to 2019, 57 of them between the ages of 55 to 64. During that same period, more than 30,000 workers became [sick or were injured from heat exposure](#).

But the statistics don't tell the full story, say safety experts. The numbers are based on employer surveys, and as Juley Fulcher, worker health and safety advocate for the nonprofit Public Citizen, writes in her recent [report](#), "This data is notoriously unreliable because it relies on self-reporting, and less than half of employers even maintain the required records." Plus, advocates say, some workers don't report heat-related illnesses because of potential retaliation.

Whatever the actual number of fatalities related to environmental heat, they are preventable with proper monitoring and safety practices, say medical experts and advocates. Yet only a handful of [states have heat stress standards](#) for workers, including California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, and Minnesota, though only two cover indoor workers. The federal government has never adopted heat standards, despite recommendations to do so stretching back to the 1970s. Last year, however, the Biden administration [laid the groundwork](#) to begin the process for writing rules for both indoor and outdoor workers.

As part of the rulemaking process, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has received hundreds of comments, whether from the general public or from those who would be affected by the new rules. These comments hint at both the need for standards — and the messiness of trying to create them in a country with a wide variety of climates, buildings and businesses that say they can handle the problem without government intervention.

Historically, heat stress standards have focused on outdoor workers, but as states and OSHA consider implementing new rules, or updating current ones, they're including people who work indoors in high-heat spaces, such as the chefs, line cooks, dishwashers and others who toil in restaurant kitchens. This widening of the safety net, advocates say, recognizes not only the dangers inherent in indoor environments as temperatures rise, but also a basic fact: Outdoor and indoor workforces may be composed largely of Latino/Hispanic or Black workers who often feel as if they can't speak up about their conditions.

According to [numbers](#) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for instance, Latino/Hispanic and Black workers combined make up more than 50 percent of both construction laborers and cooks.

Statistics for heat-related illnesses in the hospitality industry are hard to come by, largely because most restaurants don't report these cases, says Teófilo Reyes, chief program officer for Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) United, a restaurant worker advocacy group. Since 2005, however, ROC United has been conducting surveys of 500-plus restaurant workers in cities across the country, and each survey includes workers who say their kitchens are "unsafely hot." The percentages vary widely depending on location: 18

percent in Maine in a 2010 survey; 40 percent in Los Angeles in 2011; and 45 percent in New York City in 2005.

ROC United has also submitted more than 100 comments to OSHA as part of the agency's information gathering. In many instances, these workers cite the same problems mentioned in comments already submitted to OSHA from restaurant employees: Kitchens with faulty AC units. Work spaces where the temperatures soar above 100 degrees. Cooks who feel nauseous or dizzy. Owners and managers who couldn't care less.

"I have seen kitchens get to 120 degrees with no respite," wrote Ruth Rapp in [her comment to the agency](#). "Have you ever gone to a restaurant with an open kitchen for dinner? Maybe you've even sat at the coveted Chef's table, which is typically a front-row seat to the show. While you are sitting drinking your wine jovial and happy to be dining at such a great place, the cook can't even urinate because he is so dehydrated from the heat and the conditions."

In collecting comments, Reyes with ROC United was struck by a trend: Restaurant workers who started smoking as a way to create their own breaks or escape the heat of a hellish kitchen.

"One of the funniest things in the industry is you don't get breaks, but if you smoke, you're allowed to break to go outside and smoke," Reyes says. "And I think that's a reason why a lot of restaurant workers smoke."

The line between indoors and outdoors can be a porous one for restaurant workers, and not just at barbecue joints where pit crews may drape towels soaked in ice water around their necks to keep cool as they work next to 1,000-gallon outdoor smokers. Consider executive chef Richard Beckel's 14-member team at the Woodholme Country Club in Pikesville, Md., near Baltimore.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, Beckel and his crew had to cook and serve a multi-hour buffet on the club's pool deck, a four-inch slab of cement that retains a lot of heat. The cooks were under tents with chafing dishes, grills and other cooking equipment. At one point, someone grabbed an infrared thermometer, a device often used to measure the heat inside an oven, and pointed it toward the cement. It registered 140 degrees.

Beckel was prepared for this. He knew he couldn't put fans under the tents. They would blow out the flames under his chafing dishes. Instead, he packed a large cooler with water and Gatorade and encouraged his team to hydrate regularly. More important, he also understood the rhythms of the country club, when to expect a surge or a lull at the buffet. The latter would give his cooks time to recover, perhaps walk to the kitchen on the other side of the campus. In summer, the Woodholme kitchen itself may not provide much comfort, given that temperatures there can surpass 100 degrees, too, but it does offer some benefits.

"We had people standing in the freezer" during breaks, Beckel says. The chef himself pounded down more than two gallons of water and Gatorade during that Memorial Day cookout. By the end of the shift, he was wiped out — and still dehydrated. "There comes a point when no matter how much water you drink, you're not retaining it," Beckel says. "You're just sweating it out as fast as you can get it in you."

If you talk to doctors who specialize in sports medicine, they'll tell you that there are parallels between million-dollar athletes and minimum-wage workers in the kitchen: Both are pushing their bodies under extreme heat. The difference is that professional athletes have doctors and specialists watching over them, and student-athletes have countless rules in place to protect them from heat-related illnesses. These rules may limit the amount of practice time during hot days, mandate breaks or require that athletes acclimate to the heat before undertaking strenuous exercise.

"I have seen [studies](#) that demonstrate that errors for indoor workers start going up 1 percent at every degree above 77 degrees, and that once you get higher than 92 degrees, you start losing your productivity," said Chad Asplund, a sports medicine physician and the executive director for the U.S. Council for Athletes' Health.

Unlike athletes, kitchen workers have very few heat standards to protect them, aside from those few states that have adopted rules. OSHA is on the path toward creating standards, but it could take years and the process could be shelved by a new administration. The standards will likely face pushback from industry, too, which may balk at the costs associated with regulations, including hiring more staff to allow for breaks, building designated cool-down rooms or even buying equipment to measure the heat and humidity inside kitchens.

But Fulcher, the worker safety advocate for Public Citizen, says restaurant owners who focus only on the costs don't see the big picture.

"This is not the money-loser that people think it is," Fulcher says. "Right now, workplaces are losing money because of the heat stress that they're putting their workers through. There's a whole host of things that are happening there: illness and injury, absenteeism, turnover, worker's comp and on and on and on. That's costing them money."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Prolonged heat wave to swell over Lower 48</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/01/heatwave-northwest-lower48-us-plains/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/01/heatwave-northwest-lower48-us-plains/</a>
GIST	<p>Large parts of the Lower 48 are set to bake this week after a punishing, prolonged heat wave that set records in the Pacific Northwest edges east and south. Few regions will be spared as the heat expands into different areas each day, scorching the Northern Rockies on Monday, the central states Tuesday and Wednesday and the Northeast by Thursday.</p> <p>There will be no escape from the heat in Texas, which has already endured a historically hot summer. Temperatures there are projected to remain above normal — with high temperatures mostly in the triple digits — for the whole week.</p> <p>The heat wave has its roots in the Pacific Northwest where it set records for longevity in Seattle and Portland.</p> <p>Combined with a historically severe drought, the heat has fueled dangerous conditions for the spread of wildfires in northern California, where the newly-ignited McKinney Fire continues to devour the landscape. Located in the Klamath National Forest, the blaze has torched 51,468 acres and is entirely uncontained.</p> <p>As the heat wave builds eastward, it will bring triple-digit heat to 43 million Americans. Heat advisories are already being issued in the Plains, and it's likely that excessive heat warnings will be rolled out in some cities during the days ahead.</p> <p><b>Records crumble in Northwest and northern California amid escalating fire danger</b></p> <p>Relief is finally arriving in the Pacific Northwest after a week of blistering heat although one more day of triple digit highs is forecast in eastern parts of Washington and Oregon.</p> <p>Seattle set a record for its longest stretch with highs at or above 90 degrees on record. The previous record was a tie between two five-day spans in 2015 and 1981. It hit 94 degrees on Tuesday, 91 on Wednesday, 94 on Thursday and Friday and 95 on Saturday and Sunday.</p> <p>Portland also experienced a record long stretch of exceptional heat, with a full week of consecutive days at or above 95 degrees that ended Sunday. The previous record-holder was a tie between a six-day span in 1941 and another in 1981. The city's average July high is 81.8 degrees, and yet three days between July 25 and the end of the month reached the century mark.</p>

In Medford, Ore., it got as hot as 114 degrees, just one degree from its all-time high. Tri-Cities Airport near Kennewick, Wash. managed a high of 110 degrees on Thursday, 112 on Friday and 109 degrees Saturday.

The hot temperatures across the West have fueled a spattering of wildfires in Oregon and Washington, but the McKinney Fire in northern California is the region's most severe blaze. It has burned an area roughly twice the size of Disney World as high temperatures have helped desiccate the landscape, and the ground is replete with a littering of dry fuels available to burn.

Just how dry is that region of California? The ERC, or Energy Release Component, is 97 percent. That's a figure related to how much fuel per unit area is available to burn. Values over 80 percent reflect a propensity for dangerous wildfires; at 97 percent, explosive wildfire growth is possible.

High temperatures, boosted by the effects of human-induced climate change, contribute to larger and more extreme wildfires. Eighteen of California's biggest 20 wildfires have occurred in the past two decades.

### **Extreme heat oozing east in the short-term**

As the Pacific Northwest heat wave fades, the responsible zone of high pressure — or heat dome — will sink southeastward and become absorbed by another heat dome that stretches from the Four Corners to Florida. The combined heat domes will sometimes flex northeastward in the days ahead.

Heat advisories have already been hoisted over the Plains, Ozarks and Corn Belt, encompassing St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, Des Moines, Sioux Falls and the Twin Cities.

While the core of the heat situates over the central states Tuesday and Wednesday, it could extend into the Northeast on Thursday.

Here are the day by day hot spots:

#### **Monday:**

- Numerous record highs between 90 and 105 degrees are forecast in the eastern Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies from eastern Oregon to central Montana, including Billings, Helena, Great Falls and Missoula.
- Highs in the triple digits are forecast for much of the zone from Texas (away from the coast) to western Nebraska. While predicted highs are only in the mid-90s in Missouri, the heat indexes are forecast to reach 100 to 110, including in St. Louis.

#### **Tuesday**

- Highs of at least 100 degrees are anticipated from Texas (away from the coast) to South Dakota, with heat indexes up to 105 to 110.
- Highs in the 90s are projected to cover much of the South and Midwest, with a massive zone seeing heat indexes of 100 to 105, including Dallas, Oklahoma City, Wichita, Omaha, Des Moines, Kansas City, St. Louis and Little Rock. Heat indexes flirting with 100 could extend as far north as Minneapolis.

#### **Wednesday**

- The heat is concentrated from Texas through Illinois, with widespread forecast highs from the 90 to 105, and heat indexes of 100 to 110. The heat index could reach 100 as far north as Chicago and Detroit.

#### **Thursday**

- The heat spreads into the Northeast. Boston and Hartford are both expected to hit 96 degrees on Thursday, and Albany, N.Y. could spike to 98. That would tie a record set in 1955. Highs in the mid-90s are projected from Washington to New York, with heat indexes 5 to 10 degrees higher.
- Most of the Southeast will be in the low-to-mid 90s, but oppressive humidity will push heat indexes into the upper 90s or even near 100.



- Across the Plains, upper 90s or lower 100s are probable. Dallas, Austin and San Antonio should see highs of 103 or 104 degrees.

### Plains to keep baking in the longer range

A glance in the extended range, moreover, suggests this heat dome could languish for a week or more, possibly into mid-August, as it consolidates over the Plains.

Here's a look at how hot it could get:

#### Friday:

- Upper 90s to lower 100s spread from Texas all the way north to the Canadian Border, peaking around 102 degrees in Rapid City, S.D. That would tie a record of set in 1964.

#### Saturday:

- Some cooler air sinks into the northern Plains but highs well into the 90s and low 100s stretch from Texas to Iowa.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Tensions between Kosovo, Serbia flare</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/01/kosovo-serbia-nato-tensions-explained/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/01/kosovo-serbia-nato-tensions-explained/</a>
GIST	<p>Kosovo and Serbia — two Balkan countries that fought a bloody war in the 1990s and have been living in uneasy coexistence ever since — are once again at odds, this time over moves by Kosovo to force ethnic Serbs living in its northern regions to obtain license plates issued by Kosovar authorities.</p> <p>The seemingly mundane move is anything but, as the status of ethnic Serbs living near the border between Serbia and Kosovo is at the heart of a protracted conflict between the two governments. Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in February 2008, but Serbia still considers Kosovo its province.</p> <p>“The overall security situation in the Northern municipalities of Kosovo is tense,” <a href="#">NATO’s peacekeeping force</a> in Kosovo said Sunday in a statement. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic <a href="#">said</a>, “We have never been in a more difficult situation.”</p> <p>So, what is going on?</p> <p><b>What are the tensions in Kosovo about?</b></p> <p>The latest flare-up in tensions is tied to new rules over license plates and cross-border travel documents. Under new regulations that were meant to take effect on Aug. 1, ethnic Serbs living in villages in northern Kosovo would have had to apply for license plates issued by Kosovar authorities for their vehicles. Since the 1998-99 war, some in that population had used Serbian license plates with a different status. Authorities in Kosovo tolerated the dual-track system to preserve the peace but said last year they would <a href="#">no longer do so</a>.</p> <p>Another rule would have forced Serbian nationals visiting Kosovo to get an additional entry-exit document from Kosovar authorities at the border. Previously, they could enter without it. Serbia imposes a similar rule on Kosovars seeking to cross its borders.</p> <p>The government in Kosovo’s capital, Pristina, has been trying for years to assert full institutional control over the ethnic Serb-majority areas of northern Kosovo, but it has faced fierce resistance from residents who still consider their communities part of Serbia.</p> <p>On Sunday, ethnic Serbs blockaded roads in northern Kosovo to protest the new rules, forcing Kosovar authorities to shut down two border crossings, Jarinje and Brnjak. Kosovar police said <a href="#">shots were fired</a> in their direction during the protests, although no one was hurt, Reuters reported.</p> <p>Belgrade argues that the new rules violate a 2011 <a href="#">agreement on freedom of movement</a> between Kosovo and Serbia.</p>

Kosovo's allies, including the United States and European Union, called for calm and urged Pristina to [delay implementation](#) of the new rules. Late on Sunday, Kosovo agreed to a 30-day delay if all roadblocks were removed. Albin Kurti, Kosovo's prime minister, accused the protesters of trying to "destabilize" Kosovo and charged that Serbia was orchestrating "aggressive acts" during the protests.

Josep Borrell, the E.U.'s top diplomat, [welcomed Kosovo's decision](#) to postpone the new measures until Sept. 1 and said he expects "all roadblocks to be removed immediately."

### **How is this related to the Serbia-Kosovo conflict?**

The roots of the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo go back to the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 2000s, which itself followed a drawn-out period of ethnic conflicts between the Yugoslav republics in the 1990s. Serbia and Kosovo fought a brutal war between 1998 and 1999 that ended with the involvement of NATO in a U.S.-backed bombing campaign against Serbian territory.

Serbia is a majority Orthodox Christian nation, but Kosovo — previously a province of Yugoslavia — is dominated by ethnic Albanians, who are largely Muslim, in addition to a minority of ethnic Serbs. Tensions flared between the groups, particularly over moves in 1989 by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, a nationalist Serb, to abrogate the autonomy of Kosovo enshrined in the Yugoslav constitution.

In response, Kosovar militants formed the Kosovo Liberation Army and staged attacks against Serbia in the following years as they pushed for the creation of a new state encompassing the region's ethnic Albanian minorities. Members of the Kosovo Liberation Army were also accused of committing [war crimes](#) against ethnic Serbs in Kosovo and [those they viewed as collaborators](#).

Authorities in Belgrade violently cracked down on the Albanian population of Kosovo, viewing them as supportive of the KLA and its separatist attacks. More than 1 million Kosovar Albanians were driven from their homes.

Western countries and NATO became involved, bringing the parties together in France in February 1999 to negotiate a truce. While the Kosovar side agreed to a truce, Yugoslavia — which by then encompassed only Serbia and Montenegro — did not. Atrocities committed [against Kosovar Albanians](#) continued in what the U.S. State Department at the time called a "systematic campaign" by "Serbian forces and paramilitaries" to "ethnically cleanse Kosovo."

In response, NATO launched a devastating 11-week bombing campaign against Yugoslavia that ended in June 1999, when the country signed an [agreement with NATO](#) to allow a [peacekeeping force into Kosovo](#).

### **Why is NATO in Kosovo, and what is its mandate?**

NATO has had a peacekeeping force in Kosovo — Kosovo Force, or KFOR — since June 1999. The creation of the force was approved by a U.N. Security Council resolution.

KFOR's initial goal was to prevent conflict from restarting between ethnic Serbs and Albanians after NATO and Yugoslavia signed a peace agreement allowing for the return of ethnic Albanians displaced by the war.

Since then, the force has gradually been reduced, from roughly 50,000 troops to fewer than 4,000 today. In its own words, it works to [maintain security and stability](#) in the region, support humanitarian groups and civil society, train and support the Kosovo Security Force and "support the development of a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic and peaceful Kosovo."

In its statement about the [protests in Kosovo](#) on Sunday, KFOR said it was "monitoring" the situation and was "prepared to intervene if stability is jeopardized."

### **How is this related to the Russia-Ukraine war?**

The Balkans have not escaped the [reverberations of the war in Ukraine](#).

	<p>Kosovo has <a href="#">supported Ukraine</a> since Russia’s invasion, which Kurti, the prime minister, called “an attack against us all.” Ukraine has not recognized Kosovo’s independence.</p> <p>Russia — a long-standing ally of Serbia — does not recognize Kosovo as an independent state, either, and has echoed Serbia’s president in blaming the government in Pristina for the renewed tensions in northern Kosovo.</p> <p>Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for Russia’s Foreign Ministry, accused Kosovo on Sunday of using the new licensing laws and ID documents to discriminate against the Serbian population.</p> <p>“We call on Pristina and the United States and the European Union backing it to stop provocation and observe the Serbs’ rights in Kosovo,” she said, according to Russia’s official <a href="#">Tass</a> news agency.</p> <p>Russian President Vladimir Putin has cited Kosovo to justify his recognition of two separatist provinces in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. “Very many states of the West recognized [Kosovo] as an independent state,” <a href="#">Putin told U.N. chief António Guterres</a> when the two met in April. “We did the same in respect of the republics of Donbas.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Study: Seattle was a millennial magnet</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/seattle-was-a-top-draw-for-millennials-heres-where-they-came-from/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/seattle-was-a-top-draw-for-millennials-heres-where-they-came-from/</a>
GIST	<p>Seattle was an “it” city for millennials in the 2010s — the huge influx of young adults was among our most notable demographic trends of the decade. Tens of thousands were drawn by the natural beauty, outdoors lifestyle, progressive politics and booming tech economy.</p> <p>Now, a new study gives us a better sense of just how popular Seattle was among millennial movers, and also where those young people came from.</p> <p>The study is a joint effort by researchers at Harvard University and the U.S. Census Bureau. They looked at the migration patterns of more than 31 million Americans born between 1984 and 1992 — this includes the bulk of the millennial generation — as they went from childhood to young adulthood.</p> <p>As it turns out, the majority of Americans in this age group didn’t stray far from home. But the study found that among those millennials who did move away, 1.8% chose Seattle. That ranks as the fifth most-popular destination.</p>

## Seattle fifth biggest destination for millennial movers

Among young U.S. adults (born between 1984 and 1992) who moved away from the area in which they grew up, Seattle was the fifth most-popular destination.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Harvard University Reporting by GENE BALK, graphic by MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

New York was at the top, attracting 3.2% of millennial movers, followed closely by Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta. Seattle punched well above its weight in fifth place, attracting a greater share of millennial movers than many larger population centers, including Chicago.

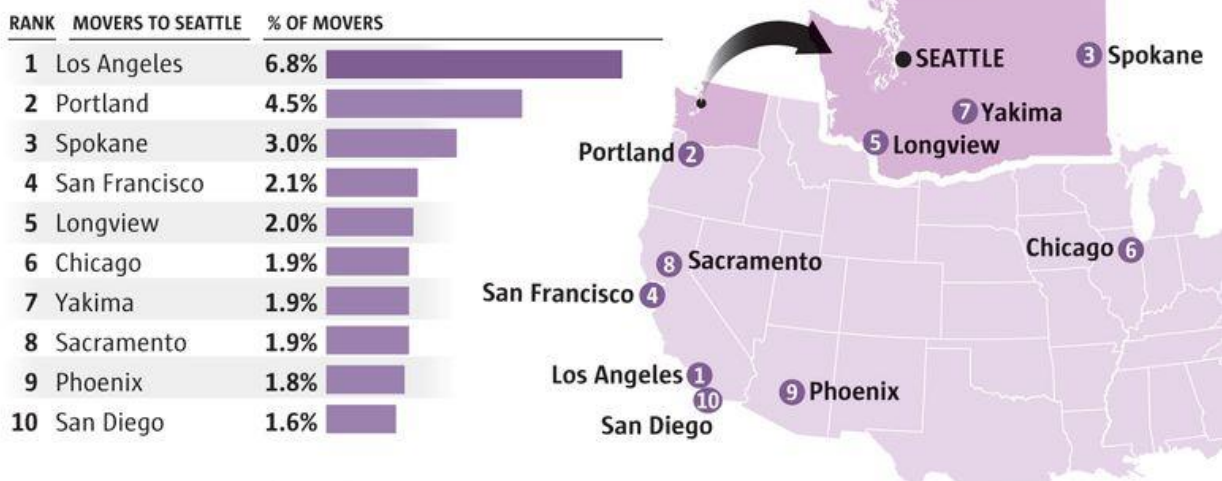
The researchers used a unique data set, which combined decennial census, survey and tax data for these young Americans. Researchers looked at where these individuals lived at age 16, and then where they were living 10 years later at age 26 (the records were anonymized to protect privacy).

Because the age group studied were born between 1984 and 1992, the study covers the years 2010 to 2018 — the years in which these folks turned 26.

The data set counted about 480,000 people who were living in the Seattle area at age 26 in the 2010-18 period. Of these, about 300,000 were from here — in other words, they'd also been living in the Seattle area at age 16. The remaining 180,000 26-year-olds grew up somewhere else and moved here.

## Seattle a major draw for California millennials

Among young adults living in the Seattle area who grew up somewhere else, the largest group came from Los Angeles (6.8% of all young movers to Seattle). Three other California cities of origin were in the top 10: San Francisco, Sacramento, and San Diego.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Harvard University Reporting by GENE BALK, graphic by MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Typically, the Seattle area refers to the metro area of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. This study is a little different. Researchers used “commuter zones” instead of metro areas. Commuter zones (CZs) are collections of counties that serve as a measure of local labor markets. The data tracked the migration of young adults from all 741 CZs in the U.S.

These CZs are quite a bit larger than metro areas, presumably because some people take on insanely long commutes. For example, the CZ for Seattle stretches from Skagit County in the north to Lewis County in the south.

While the Seattle area was overall a top destination for millennial movers, the study found some differences along racial and ethnic lines.

Seattle was a top 10 destination for both white and Asian millennial movers, but not for Black and Hispanic ones. About 1.9% of white millennials who left their childhood area moved to Seattle, and around 3.3% of Asian movers chose Seattle.

Atlanta was the most-popular destination for Black millennials who left their childhood CZ, but it did not rank in the top 10 for white, Hispanic or Asian millennial movers. Los Angeles was the No. 1 destination for both Hispanic and Asian movers, while New York was the top destination for white movers.

The data also sheds light on where millennials who moved to Seattle came here from — and if you guessed California, well done.

Four of the top 10 origin CZs were in the Golden State, with Los Angeles easily taking the top spot — among those 26-year-olds in Seattle who lived elsewhere at age 16, nearly 7% came from L.A. The other California locales in the top 10 are San Francisco, Sacramento and San Diego.

Two other faraway CZs — Phoenix and Chicago — also made the list.

But four of the top origin CZs for Seattle are closer to home, with Portland in the No. 2 spot, and Spokane, Longview and Yakima also in the top 10.

There were some notable differences along racial and ethnic lines among young movers to Seattle.

For example, Black millennials who left their childhood home for Seattle were the most likely to come from distant places in the Midwest, South and Northeast — 1.6% came from Atlanta, 1.5% from Chicago, and 1.1% from New York. For white, Asian and Hispanic movers to Seattle, no locale outside of the Western U.S. broke the 1% mark.

White and Hispanic millennials movers to Seattle were the most likely to come from other parts of Washington, although Hispanic movers in particular also came in large numbers from the Southwest, with about 9% of Hispanic movers to Seattle originating in Los Angeles. A large share of Asian millennial movers to Seattle — nearly 4% — also came here from Los Angeles.

While Los Angeles sent a lot of millennials our way, we returned the favor.

The data shows that among young people originally from Seattle who left the area, the top destination — attracting about 7% of all Seattle millennial expats — was the City of Angels.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 First Nile virus WA 2022 detected Tri-Cities</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/state/washington/article264045296.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/state/washington/article264045296.html</a>
GIST	The first West Nile virus detected in Washington state in 2022 has been found in mosquitoes in Kennewick trapped by the Benton County Mosquito Control District.



The detection was actually later than last year, despite a bumper crop of mosquitoes due to the rainy spring.

Last year the first West Nile virus in the state was detected in mosquitoes in the Burbank area above five miles from Pasco in early July.

During the 2021 mosquito season two people were infected in the Tri-Cities area were sick enough from the virus to be hospitalized. They were in their 40s and 50s.

In addition a horse and an alpaca were infected and 13 mosquito samples that were positive for the virus.

"Most cases of West Nile virus are mild," said Dr. Amy Person, health officer for Benton and Franklin counties, in a statement on Monday. "However, serious illness and death are also possible."

In 2016, a Benton County woman in her 70s died from the virus.

Most people infected with the West Nile virus through the bite of an infected mosquito will have no symptoms.

But one if five people will develop a fever and other symptoms such as a headache or body aches, and one in 150 people infected will develop more serious complications, including encephalitis or meningitis.

Those most likely to develop a serious illness due to the virus are those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure or kidney disease.

The Benton Franklin Health District says anyone with symptoms of West Nile virus should contact their doctor and everyone should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Election workers: 1,000 'hostile' contacts</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/01/politics/doj-election-threats-task-force/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/01/politics/doj-election-threats-task-force/index.html</a>
GIST	<p><b>Washington (CNN)</b>A task force <a href="#">launched by the Justice Department</a> last year to investigate threats against election workers looked at more than 1,000 contacts "reported as hostile or harassing" and said about 11% of those "met the threshold for a federal criminal investigation."</p> <p>The findings were presented at a briefing on Monday with US Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite and a bipartisan group of about 750 election officials and workers from across the country as they prepare for the midterm elections.</p> <p>The Election Threats Task Force, which was <a href="#">created last year</a> to address an increasing number of election workers' concerns over ongoing threats against them, also found that in instances where a source of reported contact was identified, "in 50% of the matters, the source contacted the victim on multiple occasions."</p> <p>Aside from the 11% of the contacts that merited a federal investigation, "the remaining reported contacts did not provide a predication for a federal criminal investigation," the Justice Department said in a news release announcing the findings on Monday. "While many of the contacts were often hostile, harassing, and abusive towards election officials, they did not include a threat of unlawful violence."</p> <p>The task force also found that election workers in states with close elections were more likely to receive threats. According to the news release, "58% of the total of potentially criminal threats were in states that underwent 2020 post-election lawsuits, recounts, and audits, such as Arizona, Georgia, Colorado, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Wisconsin." The states listed by the Justice Department are all battlegrounds where former President Donald Trump lost to Joe Biden.</p>



	<p>The task force has brought four federal criminal cases so far, the Justice Department said, and plans to bring more cases in the near future. <a href="#">In one case</a>, a Massachusetts man was arrested on Friday after being indicted by a grand jury for allegedly making a bomb threat last year toward an election official in the Arizona's Secretary of State office.</p> <p><a href="#">CNN previously reported</a> that election officials are increasingly worried about their safety as midterm season approaches. Kim Wyman, the top election security official at the federal US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, said in June that physical security concerns have "really ramped up since 2020 because of threats that we've seen to state and local officials across the country."</p> <p>In light of the ongoing threats, officials were also provided at Monday's briefing with resources for seeking funding geared toward increased security at election offices.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Recall: beverage, nutrition products</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/01/health/beverage-recall/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/01/health/beverage-recall/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN)Food service company Lyons Magnus issued a voluntary recall for 53 beverage products over possible contamination with Cronobacter sakazakii, according to an announcement posted by the company on Friday.</p> <p>The <a href="#">recall</a> includes certain lots of beverages, liquid coffee, pediatric nutritional supplements, protein shakes, nutritional shakes and thickened liquids. Products included in the recall include some branded as Oatly, Stumptown, Glucerna, Intelligentsia, Aloha, Kate Farms and Premier Protein. "Preliminary root cause analysis shows that the products did not meet commercial sterility specifications," the recall said.</p> <p>No illnesses or complaints related to these products have been reported, the company said. People who have purchased the recalled products are asked to throw them out or return them for a refund.</p> <p>Cronobacter is a bacteria that can be found in dry goods and sewer water, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Infection. Infection can be particularly dangerous in infants, people over 65, and people with weakened immune systems. Symptoms include fever, meningitis, and seizures in infants.</p> <p>The recall does not include products manufactured for children younger than 1.</p> <p>The bacteria is the center of a separate <a href="#">recall of powdered infant formula</a>, which is still ongoing.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<i>The recalled products are:</i>

<b>Brand</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>UPC Carton</b>	<b>UPC Case (if sold in cases)</b>	<b>Lot Code</b>	<b>Best By Date</b>
Lyons Ready Care	Thickened Dairy Drink - Moderately Thick/Honey Consistency 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796100466	10045796100463	4512	12/30/2022
				5512	12/31/2022
				5902	11/1/2022
	Thickened Dairy Drink - Moderately Thick/Honey Consistency 24ct/8 fl oz cartons	045796100442	10045796100449	0012	11/6/2022
	2.0 High Calorie High Protein Nutritional Drink Butter Pecan 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796100497	10045796100494	1412	2/15/2023
				6312	2/10/2023
				9312	2/13/2023
				9902	1/4/2023
	2.0 High Calorie High Protein Nutritional Drink Chocolate 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796100503	10045796100500	8212	2/2/2023
	Thickened Dairy Drink - Mildly Thick/Nectar Consistency 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796100459	10045796100456	3512	12/29/2022
				4512	12/30/2022
				7902	11/3/2022
	2.0 High Calorie High Protein Nutritional Drink Vanilla 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796100916	10045796100913	5312	2/9/2023
				6312	2/10/2023
				6512	3/2/2023
				7512	3/3/2023
				8512	3/4/2023
				8902	1/3/2023
				9902	1/4/2023
	Thickened Dairy Drink - Mildly Thick/Nectar Consistency 24ct/8 fl oz cartons	045796100435	10045796100432	3712	1/18/2023
				5212	12/1/2022
				5712	1/20/2023
				8512	1/3/2023
				8902	11/4/2022
				4712	1/19/2023
				9902	11/5/2022
Lyons Barista Style	Almond Non-Dairy Beverage 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796101654	10045796101651	2012	1/7/2023
				3012	1/8/2023
				3712	3/19/2023

				4012	1/9/2023
				5712	3/21/2023
				5012	1/10/2023
				1612	3/7/2023
				2612	3/8/2023
				2712	3/18/2023
				3612	3/9/2023
				8412	2/22/2023
				0612	3/6/2023
				2212	1/27/2023
				3212	1/28/2023
				4212	1/29/2023
	Coconut Non-Dairy Beverage 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796101791	10045796101798	6412	2/20/2023
				7412	2/21/2023
	Oat Non-Dairy Beverage 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	045796101807	10045796101804	0612	3/6/2023
				2212	1/27/2023
				3212	1/28/2023
				4212	1/29/2023
				6412	2/20/2023
				7412	2/21/2023
Pirq	Plant Protein Decadent Chocolate 12ct/325ml cartons	857690008065	857690008164	5412	5/25/2023
				6412	5/26/2023
				7412	5/27/2023
				8012	4/18/2023
				9012	4/19/2023
	Plant Protein Caramel Coffee 12ct/325ml cartons	857690008089	857690008140	8412	7/27/2023
				9412	7/28/2023
	Plant Protein Golden Vanilla 12ct/325ml cartons	857690008041	857690008157	3412	5/23/2023
				4412	5/24/2023
				5012	4/15/2023
	Plant Protein Decadent Chocolate 4ct/325ml cartons	857690008065	857690008294	9012	4/19/2023
	Plant Protein Caramel Coffee 4ct/325ml cartons	857690008089	857690008270	8412	7/27/2023
	Plant Protein Golden Vanilla 4ct/325ml cartons	857690008041	857690008287	4412	5/24/2023
				6012	4/16/2023
				7012	4/17/2023
		857690008300	857690008331	4412	7/23/2023
				5412	7/24/2023

	Plant Protein Very Strawberry 12ct/325ml cartons			7012	6/16/2023
				8012	6/17/2023
	Plant Protein Very Strawberry 4ct/325ml cartons	857690008300	857690008317	7012	6/16/2023
Glucerna Original 8 fl oz tetra carton 24 count club case (sold only at Costco, BJ's Wholesale Club, and Sam's Club)	Chocolate 24ct/237ml cartons	70074685656	70074685649	400254X00	8/1/2023
				400264X00	8/1/2023
				400274X00	8/1/2023
				410364X00	9/1/2023
	Strawberry 24ct/237ml cartons	70074685670	70074685663	400244X00	8/1/2023
				410354X00	9/1/2023
	Vanilla 24ct/237ml cartons	70074685632	70074685625	400194X00	8/1/2023
				400204X00	8/1/2023
				400214X00	8/1/2023
				400224X00	8/1/2023
				400234X00	8/1/2023
				410294X00	9/1/2023
				410304X00	9/1/2023
				410314X00	9/1/2023
				410334X00	9/1/2023
				410344X00	9/1/2023
Aloha	Chocolate Sea Salt Plant-Based Protein 4ct/330ml cartons	842096112355	10842096142359	8312	7/12/2023
				9312	7/13/2023
	Coconut Plant-Based Protein 4ct/330ml cartons	842096112379	10842096142373	7312	7/11/2023
	Vanilla Plant-Based Protein 4ct/330ml cartons	842096112348	10842096142342	7312	7/11/2023
	Iced Coffee Plant Based Protein 4ct/330ml cartons	842096112386	10842096142380	0412	7/19/2023
				9312	7/18/2023
Intelligentsia	ColdCoffee 12ct/330ml cartons	800222000969	10800222000966	9212	12/7/2022
	Oat Latte 12ct/330ml cartons	800222000976	10800222000980	7112	1/4/2023
				8112	1/5/2023
Kate Farms		851823006904	851823006904	2512	6/1/2023

	<i>Pediatric Standard 1.2 Vanilla 12ct/250ml cartons</i>			3512	6/2/2023
				4512	6/3/2023
				5512	6/4/2023
				6512	6/5/2023
Oatly	<i>Oat-Milk Barista Edition 12ct/32 fl oz slim cartons (Food Service Channel)</i>	190646630058	10190646630055	112	4/20/2023
				1112	4/21/2023
				2902	4/2/2023
				3902	4/3/2023
				4902	4/4/2023
				6112	4/26/2023
				9012	4/19/2023
Premier Protein	<i>Chocolate 12ct/330ml cartons</i>	643843714477	643843714200	2412/2142BT	7/20/2023
				3412/2143BT	7/21/2023
				4612/2164BT	8/11/2023
				5612/2165BT	8/12/2023
				66122166BT	8/13/2023
	<i>Vanilla 18ct/330ml cartons</i>	643843715351	643843718642	0012/2100BT	6/8/2023
				1012/2101BT	6/9/2023
				1212/2121BT	6/29/2023
				1612/2161BT	8/8/2023
				2012/2102BT	6/10/2023
				2212/2122BT	6/30/2023
				3012/2103BT	6/11/2023
				4012/2104BT	6/12/2023
	<i>Chocolate 18ct/330ml cartons</i>	643843715344	643843718581	9712/2179BT	8/26/2023
	<i>Vanilla 12ct/330ml cartons</i>	643843714507	643843713944	0612/2160BT	8/7/2023
				4902/2094BT	6/2/2023
				9512/2159BT	8/6/2023
	<i>Vanilla 4ct/330ml cartons</i>	643843714507	643843714736	4902/2094BT	6/2/2023
				5902/2095BT	6/3/2023
				6902/2096BT	6/4/2023
				7902/2097BT	6/5/2023
				8902/2098BT	6/6/2023

	Café Latte 4ct/330ml cartons	643843716686	643843716662	3212/2123BT	7/1/2023
				4212/2124BT	7/2/2023
				5212/2125BT	7/3/2023
				62122126BT	7/4/2023
				7212/2127BT	7/5/2023
	Café Latte 18ct/330ml cartons	643843716655	643843718567	8212/2128BT	7/6/2023
	Vanilla 15ct/330ml cartons	643843714507	643843720461	5902/2095BT	6/3/2023
	MRE Cookies & Cream Protein Shake 4ct/330ml cartons	810044573893	10810044573968	2112	4/22/2023
				3112	4/23/2023
				9612	6/18/2023
	Milk Chocolate Protein Shake 4ct/330ml cartons	810044573916	10810044573944	3112	4/23/2023
				4112	4/24/2023
				5112	4/25/2023
	Salted Caramel Protein Shake 4ct/330ml cartons	810044573923	10810044573937	1112	4/21/2023
				2112	4/22/2023
				7612	6/16/2023
				8612	6/17/2023
	Vanilla Milk Shake Protein Shake 4ct/330ml cartons	810044573909	10810044573951	0112	4/20/2023
				1112	4/21/2023
				6612	6/15/2023
				7612	6/16/2023
	Stumptown	Cold Brew Coffee With Oat Milk Original 12ct/325ml cartons	10855186006875	3312	12/9/2022
				4312	12/10/2022
		Cold Brew Coffee With Oat Milk Horchata 12ct/325ml cartons	10855186006892	4312	12/10/2022
				5312	12/11/2022
		Cold Brew Coffee With Oat Milk Chocolate 12ct/325ml cartons	10855186006892	6312	12/12/2022
		Cold Brew Coffee With Cream & Sugar Chocolate 12ct/325ml cartons	855186006861	0412	12/16/2022
				1412	12/17/2022
		Cold Brew Coffee with Cream & Sugar Original 12ct/325ml cartons	10855186006844	2312	12/8/2022
				3312	12/9/2022



Imperial	Med Plus 2.0 Vanilla Nutritional Drink 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	074865927307	10074865927304	2312	2/6/2023
				3312	2/7/2023
				7112	1/22/2023
				8112	1/23/2023
				8612	3/14/2023
	Thickened Dairy Drink - Moderately Thick/Honey Consistency 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	0734730556147	10734730556144	5512	12/31/2022
				5902	11/1/2022
				6902	11/2/2022
				7212	12/3/2022
	Thickened Dairy Drink - Mildly Thick/Nectar Consistency 24ct/8 fl oz cartons	074865945493	10074865945490	0012	11/6/2022
				2212	11/28/2022
				3212	11/29/2022
				4212	11/30/2022
				5712	1/20/2023
				6712	1/21/2023
				9902	11/5/2022
	Med Plus NSA 1.7 Vanilla Nutritional Drink 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	0734730310749	10734730310746	1902	12/27/2022
				1312	2/5/2023
	Med Plus 2.0 Butter Pecan Nutritional Drink 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	074865927321	10074865927328	0012	1/5/2023
				1412	2/15/2023
				9512	3/5/2023
				9902	1/4/2023
	Thickened Dairy Drink - Mildly Thick/Nectar Consistency 12ct/32 fl oz cartons	0734730556154	10734730556151	2512	12/28/2022
				3512	12/29/2022
				6902	11/2/2022
	Thickened Dairy Drink - Moderately Thick/Honey Consistency 24ct/8 fl oz cartons	074865945509	10074865945506	4212	11/30/2022
				6212	12/2/2022

HEADLINE	08/02 Iran gains foothold in South America
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/world/iran-gains-foothold-south-america-biden-admin-pursues-nuclear-deal">https://www.foxnews.com/world/iran-gains-foothold-south-america-biden-admin-pursues-nuclear-deal</a>
GIST	Iran has been seeking to increase its influence in South America and undermine American interests and security, drawing little response from the Biden administration as it tries to salvage the Obama-era nuclear agreement with the country.

"The Iranian Revolutionary Guards are much more actively involved in subversive and assassination issues," James Phillips, the senior research fellow for foreign policy at the Heritage Foundation, told Fox News.

Phillips pointed to a 2011 plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C., noting that Iranian agents sought to partner with a Mexican drug cartel to carry out the plot on U.S. soil.

"This was over 10 years ago.... it's been going on a long time," Phillips said.

[Iran's outreach](#) in Latin America has seemingly begun to pick up again in recent years, most recently with the appearance of a mysterious Venezuelan-flagged plane in Argentina last month. The plane, belonging to a U.S. sanctioned Iranian operator, landed in Ezeiza with a crew of 14 Venezuelans and five Iranians, one of whom was a senior Iranian official.

According to reporting from the Wall Street Journal, the plane has since been seized and an investigation has been launched, but exactly why it was allowed to land in Argentina and what it was doing there remains somewhat a mystery.

Argentinian federal police searched the plane and found material used for military cyber defense operations on board, while it was reported that the captain of the plane was Gholamreza Ghasemi, a board member and manager of Fars Air Qeshm, a U.S. sanctioned Iranian airline.

Argentinian President Alberto Fernández has insisted there was nothing suspicious about the plane, while the country's security minister claimed the captain only coincidentally shared the same name as Ghasemi, a claim contradicted by Paraguayan intelligence and questioned by Argentinian members of Congress.

Though Iran has a long history of partnership with Venezuela, a country with a history of seeking to undermine American interests, Iranian cooperation with democratic Argentina would be a more troubling development for the U.S. in the region.

A week before the plane landed in Ezeiza, both Iran and Argentina applied for membership in the BRICS group, a group of five emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The group, which has held an annual summit since 2009, has a significant influence over world affairs, casting itself as an alternative to U.S. dominated Western alliances.

An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson told Reuters that membership in BRICS would result in added values for both sides," while [Russia boasted](#) that the U.S. was failing to cut off its international influence amid its ongoing war in Ukraine.

Iranian influence in [South America](#) would be beneficial to Russia, which under President Vladimir Putin's leadership, has made it a goal to erode U.S. influence in the region.

"Moscow has been deepening ties with fellow authoritarian regimes in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, as part of a long-term strategy to establish permanent presence in the region," Rebekah Koffler the president of Doctrine & Strategy Consulting, former DIA intelligence officer, and the author of "Putin's Playbook: Russia's Secret Plan to Defeat America," told Fox News.

Koffler said Russia's aims are not only to gain access to new markets and resources as much of the world attempts to isolate the country, but to demonstrate to the U.S. that it can operate militarily in America's backyard.

"Ultimately, Russia wants to build a formidable force posture on America's doorstep, as a deterrent, which Moscow could activate in the event of Washington intervening with Putin's plans to re-establish control of Russia's former Soviet states, such as Ukraine," Koffler said.

The mysterious plane in Argentina is not the only hint Iran is seeking to bolster its influence in Latin America. Earlier this year, Iranian Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohsen Rezaee was an invited guest to the inaugural ceremony of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. Rezaee, a former member of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, is wanted in Argentina for allegedly masterminding the 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires.

Ortega has long been a controversial leader and has faced accusations of authoritarian policies by international observers. His time in power has seen Nicaragua hit with multiple U.S. sanctions, while the State Department has criticized his support of "radical regimes" in Cuba and Iran as well as repeated attempts to undermine capitalism and U.S. interests.

There is also evidence that Iran has extended its influence as far north as Mexico. Hezbollah, which is designated a [terrorist organization](#) by the U.S. and European Union and receives military training, weapons, and financial support from Iran, has been gaining a foothold in Latin America for much of the last decade and has more recently made inroads with drug cartels in Mexico.

The Justice Department announced last month that the U.S. had extradited Adalberto Fructuoso Comparan-Rodriguez, a former mayor of Aguililla, Mexico and alleged leader of the United Cartels in [Michoacán, Mexico](#), on drug trafficking charges.

According to the allegations, Comparan-Rodriguez met in Cali, Colombia with a drug trafficker believed to be associated with Hezbollah. Comparan-Rodriguez and an associate told the trafficker they could supply hundreds of kilograms of methamphetamine, eventually agreeing to send 500 kilograms of methamphetamine from Mexico into Texas, where they were then transported to Miami.

[Law enforcement](#) agencies were able to seize the drugs before they hit the streets after Comparan-Rodriguez was arrested by Guatemalan authorities, but the case demonstrated Hezbollah's growing influence in Latin America.

Hezbollah has a long documented history of operating in the tri-border area between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, while the organization has more recently expanded their reach to Venezuela. In 2019, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asserted that the terrorist organization now has "active cells" in Venezuela that pose a security risk to the U.S.

"People don't recognize that Hezbollah has active cells – the Iranians are impacting the people of Venezuela and throughout South America," [he said at the time](#). "We have an obligation to take down that risk for America."

However, the current administration has taken a different approach to the threat of Iran, abandoning the Trump administration's policy of maximum pressure in favor of trying to rekindle the Obama-era Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, largely known as the Iran nuclear deal.

Phillips said the new approach has been a mistake, arguing that the Biden administration has become complacent on Iran in an effort to salvage part of former President Obama's legacy.

"The Biden administration has painted itself into a corner on Iran sanctions," Phillips said. "It greatly underestimated the leverage it would need to extract another nuclear deal from Iran...it let its foot off the pedal on the maximum pressure sanction strategy that the Trump administration had adopted."

The smaller amount of leverage has only served to embolden Iran, who in addition to its activities in Latin America has accelerated its efforts to obtain nuclear weapons.

"Iran is on the threshold of acquiring a nuclear weapon," Phillips said. "They already have enough enriched uranium to build a nuclear bomb within weeks."

	<p>Phillips believes that sanctions alone are not the solution, instead arguing that the administration needs to demonstrate a credible threat of military force to deter Iran's growing ambitions.</p> <p>"Sanctions alone aren't going to stop Iran's nuclear program any more than they stopped North Korea's," he said. "What would deter Iran is a credible threat of the effective use of force."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/01 Nationwide shipping logjam potential</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/port-of-los-angeles-clogged-railroad-worker-shortage/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/port-of-los-angeles-clogged-railroad-worker-shortage/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Just as retailers are starting to gear up for the holiday season, there are warnings of a possible nationwide shipping logjam. A shortage of rail workers, not enough rail cars and importers failing to pick up their goods are causing cargo to pile up once again at the Port of Los Angeles — <a href="#">a key link in the U.S. supply chain</a>.</p> <p>Port director Gene Seroka said containers are already piling up and clogging the docks.</p> <p>"There are about 35,000 containers that are designated for rail on our docks right now," he said. "A normal day looks more like 9,000 units."</p> <p>Seroka said that ships could be backed up again in four to six weeks if nothing is done about the containers.</p> <p>Ben Nolan, an analyst specializing in transportation at Stifel Financial, said that over the last three years, railroads have lost 20% of their employees.</p> <p>"A lot of that is because they cut their own workforce," he said. "When you're hyper-efficient, you're ill-prepared for unexpected things like pandemics."</p> <p>Nolan said railroads tried to streamline operations with a practice called "precision scheduled railroading," which sometimes uses shorter trains.</p> <p>Union Pacific Operations Vice President Eric Gehringer said the railroad has hired hundreds of new employees.</p> <p>"We're handling that volume," he told CBS News. "Resources beyond the railroad, that's where we need to see gains."</p> <p>The rails move containers inland where merchandise is then transferred and delivered. But with truck driver shortages and a glut of goods arriving — there is nowhere to offload the containers.</p> <p>"The warehouses are full," Nolan said.</p> <p>"It all begins with the importer picking up their cargo inland a little bit faster," Seroka said.</p> <p>But the system could also fall apart quickly.</p> <p>Dockworkers at the port told CBS News they've been without a contract for a month, and rail workers said they're at the "dead end" after two years of negotiations. The White House recently assembled an emergency team to help railroads avoid a strike.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/01 New Zealand fully reopens borders</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/zealand-fully-reopens-borders-1st-time-covid-pandemic/story?id=87743730">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/zealand-fully-reopens-borders-1st-time-covid-pandemic/story?id=87743730</a>
<b>GIST</b>	New Zealand fully has reopened its borders for the first time since the <a href="#">COVID-19 pandemic hit</a> , making it the final Western country to do so.

The reopening, which went into effect at midnight local time Sunday, means tourists from all over the world and international students will be allowed to enter the country. Cruise ships and foreign yachts will also be able to dock at ports.

Most visitors are still required to provide [proof of vaccination](#) before being allowed to enter the country but there are no quarantine requirements.

People traveling by air are also required to complete two rapid negative tests before arriving and people traveling by sea must test upon disembarking.

Those not required to show proof of vaccination include New Zealand citizens and permanent residents; Australian citizens living in New Zealand; children aged 16 and under; refugees; people arriving from Antarctica; citizens of Afghanistan being evacuated; and those who can't be vaccinated for medical reasons.

During a [speech at the China Business Summit](#) in Auckland Monday, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern called the reopening an "enormous moment," saying it had been "a staged and cautious process."

"We, alongside the rest of the world, continue to manage a very live global pandemic, while keeping our people safe," Ardern said. "But keeping people safe extends to incomes and wellbeing too."

She continued, "And as a value-added exporting country which depends on consumers around the world choosing our products to ensure our economic security, our key message is that we are open for business." New Zealand first announced [plans to reopen](#) in February, nearly two years after the borders closed in March 2020.

Fully vaccinated New Zealand citizens and other eligible travelers from Australia were allowed to enter at the end of February and fully vaccinated New Zealanders from the rest of the world in March.

Since then, restrictions have continued to ease up to the border fully reopening.

Officials celebrated the reopening, including Tourism Minister Stuart Nash and Immigration Minister Michael Wood.

"Prior to the pandemic, the international education sector was worth several billion dollars to our country and education providers," Wood [said](#) in a statement. "While we've continued to support the sector with border exceptions through the pandemic, the full resumption of visa processing is great news for our universities, polytechnics and wānanga, and schools, English language schools, and private training establishments."

Nash said the return of cruise ships, in particular, will help boost the economy because the industry brought in more than \$500 million per year pre-pandemic.

"Today's change in border settings marks the final milestone for our reconnecting strategy," Nash said in a statement. "This is great news to the tourism industry and economy as we approach spring and summer with people from the Northern hemisphere booking their winter holidays. We've heard optimistic messages from tourism operators who are ready to welcome back international visitors from all over the world."

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HEADLINE	08/01 Iraq threats of protest, violence escalation
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/threat-protests-violent-escalation-stirs-panic-iraq-87736452">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/threat-protests-violent-escalation-stirs-panic-iraq-87736452</a>

BAGHDAD -- Thousands gathered in Baghdad on Monday for a counter-rally called by Iran-backed groups against their rival, an influential cleric whose followers are staging a sit-in inside the Iraqi parliament — only to withdraw hours later.

It wasn't immediately clear if the pullback by supporters of the Coordination Framework, an alliance lead by Shiite parties close to Iran, was a definite de-escalation in their power struggle with cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's loyalists.

Al-Sadr's followers have been camped out inside the parliament in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone since thousands stormed the building on Saturday, demanding reforms and denouncing the Iran-backed alliance. Al-Sadr's representative have called on supporters in Iraqi provinces to protest in their cities and towns in support of the parliament sit-in.

Dueling protests between the two major Shiite factions would have raised the prospect of escalating tensions and plunged Iraq deeper into crisis. The country has struggled with a political vacuum 10 months since federal elections were held last October with no one winning an outright parliament majority and tensions remain high.

Earlier Monday, Iraqi security forces erected concrete barriers ahead of the street protests by the Iran-backed groups.

By early afternoon, thousands of Shiite men arrived at the July 14th Bridge, which leads to the Green Zone, waving Iraqi flags and those belonging to Iran-backed groups and figures. They wore black, the custom ahead of the holy day of Ashura, an important day of mourning in the Shiite Muslim calendar. Ashoura starts on Sunday.

"We are sending a message to the other side that we are with the law, the state," said one demonstrator, a member of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law party. He declined to provide his name, fearing for his safety. Al-Maliki leads the Coalition Framework.

The alliance had instructed its supporters to stay at the bridge and not enter the Green Zone but to "wait for instructions."

Paramilitary forces belonging to the Popular Mobilization Forces, a state-sanctioned umbrella among which Iran-backed groups are the most powerful, formed a ring around the protesters to block off passage to the Green Zone.

Hours later, the protesters suddenly folded up their banners and left the area — after one of the alliance leaders, Qais al-Khazali, directed them to leave, announcing that their "excursion" Monday had been for "the sake of Iraq only."

Protesters promptly curled up flags and left the area. They also dismantled the tents erected near the protest site, that at first signaled the possibility of drawn-out demonstrations in a standoff between the two Shiite factions.

On Sunday, al-Sadr had egged on his followers inside the parliament, calling for a "revolution" to change the political system, the constitution and abolish his rivals. He urged Iraqi tribes to join him, a message his rivals saw as a call to a coup.

And though the Coalition Framework swiftly urged for a counter-rally, fractures also appeared within its leadership, with some members calling for restraint and others pushing for escalation.

Among those urging control and moderation was Fatah Alliance chief Hadi al-Ameri, two Shiite political officials told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. Kataib Hezbollah, another Iran-backed militia group, has also suggested it will not participate in the street protests.



If the situation escalates, it would be the closest that al-Sadr and al-Maliki's followers have come to a confrontation since 2008, when Iraqi troops during al-Maliki's administration drove out al-Sadr's then-militia, the Mahdi Army, out of the southern city of Basra.

Al-Sadr and al-Maliki, powerful in their own right, have been bitter enemies ever since.

Al-Sadr and his party, though the winners in the October parliamentary elections, were unable to muster majority support to form a government. The chance to do so now is with the Coalition Framework, which has nominated a protégé of al-Maliki for the post.

The sit-in by al-Sadr's followers — a wide grassroots base among the most impoverished and disenfranchised Iraqi Shiites — is seen as a tactic to pressure his rivals and prevent them from forming the next government.

Late Monday, caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi called for preserving public order and urged the sit-in “brothers” to “cooperate with the security forces, respect state institutions and evacuate them.”

Meanwhile, two Shiite officials told the AP that the alliance sent al-Sadr an offer, through a mediator, that he call off the sit-in inside parliament in exchange for the Coalition Framework abandoning efforts to form a government on its own in the near-term.

The proposal also includes that the parliament be closed for an indefinite period while the two sides negotiate about forming the next Cabinet, they said. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the proposal has not been made public.

There was no immediate reply from al-Sadr.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Police disperse anti-UN protesters Congo</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/police-disperse-anti-protesters-congo-amid-tensions-87763832">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/police-disperse-anti-protesters-congo-amid-tensions-87763832</a>
GIST	<p>BENI, Congo -- Police dispersed about 100 demonstrators in Congo’s eastern town of Beni on Monday, a day after U.N. peacekeepers returning to duty killed three people and wounded more than a dozen at the border with Uganda.</p> <p>Dalzon Mikundi, president of the Beni Urban Youth Council, said they want the U.N. to cover medical care for the victims wounded by peacekeepers amid demonstrations demanding that the U.N. force leave Congo.</p> <p>Tensions between the population in restive eastern Congo and the U.N. peacekeeping force have risen dramatically in the past week or so, with more than 20 killed in protests calling for the force to leave.</p> <p>On Sunday, U.N. peacekeepers opened fire on civilians in Kasindi, a border town with Uganda in Congo’s North Kivu province.</p> <p>“I call on the youth of Beni to put pressure peacefully and not to fall into vandalism,” said Mikundi. “I also call on our government to play its role well in securing its population so as not to rely on foreign forces.”</p> <p>U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was outraged by the shooting in Kasindi and he offered an apology to Congo's president Monday.</p>

“The Secretary-General is both saddened and dismayed by the loss of life and serious injuries sustained during this incident. He expresses his deepest condolences to the affected families, the people of the DRC (Congo) and the Congolese government,” a U.N. statement said.

Guterres also welcomed investigations into the incident and said the peacekeeper's nation has been contacted to quickly begin "judicial proceedings with the participation of victims and witnesses so that appropriate sanctions can be handed down."

U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said the secretary-general spoke to President Félix Tshisekedi of Congo on Monday morning and apologized for Sunday's incident and conveyed his condolences.

To bring about stability in eastern Congo, he said, "effective dialogue" is needed and for that to happen the U.N. demands "the unconditional withdrawal of the M23 group" and calls on all armed groups to cease all forms of violence.

Guterres said the U.N. is totally committed to coordinating and working with the Congolese armed forces, Haq said. To bring about stability in eastern DRC, effective dialogue is needed, he said, and for that to happen, we demand the unconditional withdrawal of the M23 group and call on all armed groups to cease all forms of violence.

Meanwhile, the U.N. mission in Congo paid homage on Monday in Goma to the soldiers killed amid demonstrations last week in Goma, Butembo and other places in eastern Congo. The head of the U.N. Congo mission Bintou Keita, as well as Jean-Pierre Lacroix, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, attended the ceremony.

The federal government sent a delegation to Goma over the weekend to visit the U.N. facilities and meet with the protesters to find a solution to the crisis.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 UN: world 1-step from nuclear annihilation</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/chief-warns-world-step-nuclear-annihilation-87749951">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/chief-warns-world-step-nuclear-annihilation-87749951</a>
GIST	<p>UNITED NATIONS -- The United Nations chief warned Monday that “humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation,” citing the war in Ukraine, nuclear threats in Asia and the Middle East and many other factors.</p> <p>Secretary-General Antonio Guterres gave the dire warning at the opening of the long-delayed high-level meeting to review the landmark 50-year-old treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and eventually achieving a nuclear-free world.</p> <p>The danger of increasing nuclear threats and a nuclear catastrophe was also raised by the United States, Japan, Germany, the U.N. nuclear chief and many other opening speakers at the meeting to review progress and agree to future steps to implement the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, known as the NPT.</p> <p>U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said North Korea is preparing to conduct its seventh nuclear test, Iran “has either been unwilling or unable” to accept a deal to return to the 2015 nuclear agreement aimed at reining in its nuclear program, and Russia is “engaged in reckless, dangerous nuclear saber-rattling” in Ukraine.</p> <p>He cited Russian President Vladimir Putin’s warning after its Feb. 24 invasion that any attempt to interfere would lead to “consequences you have never seen,” emphasizing that his country is “one of the most potent nuclear powers.”</p> <p>This is contrary to assurances given to Ukraine of its sovereignty and independence when it gave up its Soviet-era nuclear weapons in 1994, Blinken said, and sends “the worst possible message” to any country thinking it needs nuclear weapons to defend itself and deter aggression.</p>

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said divisions in the world since the last review conference in 2015, which ended without a consensus document, have become greater, stressing that Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons in the Ukraine war has contributed "to worldwide concern that yet another catastrophe by nuclear weapon use is a real possibility."

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock accused Russia of "brutally violating the assurances" it gave Ukraine in 1994 and said Moscow's "reckless nuclear rhetoric" since its invasion of its smaller neighbor "is putting at risk everything the NPT has achieved in five decades."

Putin appeared to roll back on his nuclear warning in a message of greetings to NPT participants posted on his website Monday.

"We believe that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and we stand for equal and indivisible security for all members of the world community," the Russian leader said.

Putin said his country "consistently follows the letter and spirit" of the NPT and expects all parties to "strictly comply with their commitments" and make "a significant contribution" at the conference to strengthening the non-proliferation regime "to ensure peace, security and stability in the world."

Most recently, Blinken said Russia seized Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhya and is using it as a military base to fire at Ukrainians, "knowing that they can't and won't shoot back because they might accidentally strike a nuclear reactor or highly radioactive waste in storage." He said this brings the notion of having "a human shield to an entirely different and horrific level."

Russia's delegation to the NPT issued a statement Monday night strongly rejecting Blinken's contention that Russia is using the Zaporizhzhya plant as a military base, saying a limited number of servicemen are there "to ensure safety and security at the power plant."

Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said the Ukraine conflict is "so grave that the specter of a potential nuclear confrontation, or accident, has raised its terrifying head again."

He warned that at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant "the situation is becoming more perilous by the day," and he urged all countries to help make possible his visit to the plant with a team of IAEA safety and security experts, saying his efforts for the past two months have been unsuccessful.

Guterres told many ministers, officials and diplomats gathered in the General Assembly Hall that the month-long review conference is taking place "at a time of nuclear danger not seen since the height of the Cold War."

The conference is "an opportunity to hammer out the measures that will help avoid certain disaster, and to put humanity on a new path towards a world free of nuclear weapons," the secretary-general said.

But Guterres warned that "geopolitical weapons are reaching new highs," almost 13,000 nuclear weapons are in arsenals around the world, and countries seeking "false security" are spending hundreds of billions of dollars on "doomsday weapons."

"All this at a time when the risks of proliferation are growing and guardrails to prevent escalation are weakening," he said, "And when crises -- with nuclear undertones -- are festering from the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and to many other factors around the world."

Guterres called on conference participants to take several actions: urgently reinforce and reaffirm "the 77-year-old norm against the use of nuclear weapons," work relentlessly toward eliminating nuclear weapons with new commitments to reduce arsenals, address "the simmering tensions in the Middle East and Asia" and promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

“Future generations are counting on your commitment to step back from the abyss,” he implored the ministers and diplomats. “This is our moment to meet this fundamental test and lift the cloud of nuclear annihilation once and for all.”

Japan’s Kishida, recalling his home city of Hiroshima where the first atomic bomb was dropped in August 1945, echoed many of Guterres’ points saying the path to a world without nuclear weapons has become harder but “giving up is not an option.”

In force since 1970, the Nonproliferation Treaty known as the NPT has the widest adherence of any arms control agreement, with some 191 countries that are members.

Under its provisions, the five original nuclear powers -- the United States, China, Russia (then the Soviet Union), Britain and France -- agreed to negotiate toward eliminating their arsenals someday and nations without nuclear weapons promised not to acquire them in exchange for a guarantee to be able to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

India and Pakistan, which didn’t join the NPT, went on to get the bomb. So did North Korea, which ratified the pact but later announced it was withdrawing. Non-signatory Israel is believed to have a nuclear arsenal but neither confirms nor denies it. Nonetheless, the treaty has been credited with limiting the number of nuclear newcomers (U.S. President John F. Kennedy once foresaw as many as 20 nuclear-armed nations) as a framework for international cooperation on disarmament.

The meeting, which ends Aug. 26, aims to generate a consensus on next steps, but expectations are low for a substantial — if any — agreement. There were 133 speakers as of Monday, plus dozens of side events.

The NPT’s five-year review was supposed to take place in 2020, when the world already faced plenty of crisis, but was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Patricia Lewis, former director of the U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research who is now in charge of international security programs at the international affairs think tank Chatham House in London, said “President Putin’s threats to use nuclear weapons have shocked the international community.”

Russia is not only an NPT signatory but a depository for treaty ratifications and in January it joined the four other nuclear powers in reiterating the statement by former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that “a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought,” she told The Associated Press.

Lewis said countries participating in the review conference will have a difficult decision to make.

To support the treaty and what it stands for, “governments will have to address Russia’s behavior and threats,” she said. “On the other hand, to do so risks dividing the treaty members -- some of whom have been persuaded by Russia’s propaganda or at least are not as concerned, for example, as the NATO states.”

And “Russia no doubt will strenuously object to being named in statements and any outcome documents,” Lewis said.

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HEADLINE	08/01 Officials: 2 more children w/monkeypox
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/children-us-test-positive-monkeypox/story?id=87767655">https://abcnews.go.com/US/children-us-test-positive-monkeypox/story?id=87767655</a>
GIST	At least four children in the U.S. have now tested positive for monkeypox, officials have confirmed.  Amidst a growing emergence of cases across the country, state officials in Indiana confirmed late last week that two children had tested positive for monkeypox. At this time, no additional information has

been made available due to patient privacy concerns, the Indiana Department of Health wrote in a statement.

“Like many other states, Indiana has seen an increase in monkeypox cases over the past month,” State Health Commissioner Dr. Kris Box said in a statement.

Federal officials had previously confirmed, last month, that [two other children](#) in the U.S had tested positive for monkeypox.

One case was confirmed in a toddler, who is a resident of California, and the other was reported in an infant, a non-U.S. resident, who was tested while traveling through Washington, D.C. The two cases are unrelated, located in different jurisdictions, and were likely the result of household transmission.

Although no information is available about the current status of the virus-positive children in Indiana, both of the other children, who have been diagnosed with monkeypox, were said to have been in good health.

However, there are concerns among health officials about how monkeypox could impact young children.

Over the weekend, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned in a [health alert](#) that there is some preliminary evidence to suggest children younger than 8 years-old could develop more severe illness, if infected with monkeypox.

At this time, the majority of monkey cases confirmed domestically and globally in the current outbreak have been detected in gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men. However, health officials have repeatedly stressed that the virus does not discriminate, and anyone exposed to monkeypox can contract the virus.

People are most commonly infected by close person-to-person contact, including intimate contact, though it is possible for the disease to also spread through respiratory secretions or by "touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox," according to the [CDC](#).

The news of additional pediatric monkeypox cases come amidst growing pressure from officials across the country for the U.S. to declare a public health emergency for the outbreak.

On Monday, Illinois became the second state in the country to declare monkeypox a public health emergency, and thus, designating Illinois a "disaster area" for the virus, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced in a press release.

“[Monkeypox virus] is a rare, but potentially serious disease that requires the full mobilization of all available public health resources to prevent the spread,” Pritzker wrote in a statement. "That’s why I am declaring a state of emergency to ensure smooth coordination between state agencies and all levels of government, thereby increasing our ability to prevent and treat the disease quickly."

The governor's declaration will allow the Illinois Department of Public Health to expand access to resources, such as vaccines and testing, in the state's efforts to combat the virus.

"We have seen this virus disproportionately impact the LGBTQ+ community in its initial spread. Here in Illinois we will ensure our LGBTQ+ community has the resources they need to stay safe while ensuring members are not stigmatized as they access critical health care," Pritzker added.

Last week, New York became the first state to declare monkeypox a "disaster emergency," with officials calling New York City the "epicenter of the outbreak."

Across the country, in San Francisco officials have also implemented a local emergency declaration for monkeypox.

Globally, more than 22,000 cases reported globally, including nearly 5,200 cases reported in the U.S., according to the CDC.

Monkeypox cases have now been reported in nearly every state in the country, with Montana, Vermont, and Wyoming now the only states that have yet to confirm cases.

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## Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	08/02 Crypto market crashed, still buying bitcoin
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/technology/crypto-bitcoin-maximalists.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/02/technology/crypto-bitcoin-maximalists.html</a>
GIST	<p>Cory Klippsten started issuing warnings about the cryptocurrency market in March. The digital coin Luna, Mr. Klippsten tweeted, was a scam, run by an entrepreneur with <a href="#">“major Elizabeth Holmes vibes.”</a> The newfangled crypto bank Celsius Network was a <a href="#">“massive blowup risk,”</a> he said.</p> <p>When those crypto projects collapsed a few weeks later, causing a <a href="#">crash</a> that has wiped out about \$1 trillion in value, Mr. Klippsten became a fixture on <a href="#">news shows</a>, where he cast the industry as a morass of hucksters and hypocrites. “Crypto is a scam,” he <a href="#">declared</a> last month.</p> <p>But Mr. Klippsten differs from most crypto haters in one crucial respect: He runs a Bitcoin company.</p> <p>In the crypto world, Mr. Klippsten is known as a Bitcoin maximalist, or “maxi” — a hard-core evangelist who believes Bitcoin will transform the financial system even as fraud pervades the rest of the crypto ecosystem. The maxis are just a subset of the crypto industry, but their ranks include influential figures like <a href="#">Jack Dorsey</a>, a founder of Twitter and an early Bitcoin proponent.</p> <p>The maxis continued buying Bitcoin even after its price plummeted to an 18-month low of roughly \$20,000 in June. (Bitcoin is simply “going on sale,” they say.) And, as the market has melted, they have embarked on a public-relations offensive, aiming to persuade investors and lawmakers that Bitcoin is different from the thousands of other digital currencies that proliferated in the last few years before tanking this spring.</p> <p>“The only future for non-Bitcoin crypto is to seek to be co-opted by banks and governments and become part of the existing system,” Mr. Klippsten, 44, said from his home in Los Angeles, where a decorative Bitcoin sculpture sat on a bookshelf behind him. “Bitcoin actually is outside of the system.”</p> <p>The debate being fueled by the maxis has become a battle for crypto’s future. The crash demonstrates how closely the industry resembles the worst of the traditional finance system — an interconnected web of risky ventures and casino-like trading practices. The maxis say they are trying to steer crypto back to some of its original ideals at a pivotal moment, as <a href="#">new regulatory scrutiny</a> and mounting consumer distrust pose an existential threat to the industry.</p> <p>They also see an opportunity to profit from the downturn. As Celsius <a href="#">imploded</a> in June, Mr. Klippsten trumpeted a <a href="#">promotion</a> giving its former customers a membership to his financial services firm, Swan Bitcoin, which provides financial planning for Bitcoin investors.</p> <p>Bitcoin advocates have been courting new adopters ever since the digital currency was invented, in 2008, by a mysterious figure known only by the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. At the time, Bitcoin backers were disillusioned with the mainstream finance system and wanted to create a form of virtual money that could be exchanged without a bank or another intermediary. With a supply limit built into its underlying code, Bitcoin was supposed to offer a hedge against inflation, since no centralized authority would be able to print more of it.</p>



Many subsequent cryptocurrencies have lacked those features. Often, new coins are issued by a group of founders who exert significant control over distribution — a dynamic that can replicate the centralized structure of traditional finance.

“Bitcoin is decentralized, digitally scarce money. Everything else is centralized,” said Jimmy Song, a crypto podcaster and an [outspoken](#) Bitcoin maxi. “There’s a world of difference between a censorship-resistant, self-sovereign money versus a gambling vehicle.”

The maxis’ utopian vision of a stable, decentralized but universally accepted alternate currency is a far cry from reality. Bitcoin’s price swings wildly, and its investors often treat it as a kind of risky stock, [no different from the shares of companies](#) traded on the tech-heavy Nasdaq index.

Hardly anyone uses Bitcoin to conduct ordinary transactions. Last year, El Salvador introduced Bitcoin as its national currency, but that project has been a [stunning failure](#). Verifying Bitcoin transactions — a process known as “mining” because it rewards participants with digital coins — is energy-intensive: Researchers estimate that Bitcoin mining may produce as much as 65 megatons of carbon dioxide per year, comparable to the annual emissions of Greece.

“You can’t use it to buy anything — it’s way too volatile and complex and laden with fees,” John Reed Stark, a former Securities and Exchange Commission official, said of Bitcoin. “There’s no intrinsic value.”

Still, the maxis have seized on the downturn to make the case that Bitcoin is the only cryptocurrency worth taking seriously. “Bitcoin Is Down, but Its Case Has Never Been More Compelling,” read a [recent](#) headline in Bitcoin Magazine.

“If you call out someone’s risks they’re taking, and they’re otherwise healthy, you can be accused of creating a run on the bank or being a troll,” said Michael Saylor, the chief executive of MicroStrategy, a software company that has built up a large Bitcoin reserve. “It’s kind of hard to explain this theoretically before the crash happens. But now it’s happened.”

In 2020, Mr. Saylor announced that MicroStrategy would begin stockpiling Bitcoin [because](#) it had “more long-term appreciation potential than holding cash.” At the end of June, the company had 129,699 Bitcoin, bought for just under \$4 billion, according to S.E.C. [filings](#). (With Bitcoin’s recent drop in value, that stash is now worth roughly \$1 billion less than what MicroStrategy paid for it.)

At the height of the crash, MicroStrategy spent \$10 million on 480 Bitcoin, even as the price per coin dipped to about \$20,000. The purchase was the smallest that MicroStrategy had made in more than a year. Mr. Saylor said the size of the purchase was not an indication that he lacked confidence in the currency; it was the most the company could afford, he said, given the cash it had available.

“I always wish we could buy more,” he said. “It’s frustrating.”

Mr. Saylor and other maxis have sometimes complained that Bitcoin is poorly represented in Washington, where lawmakers have [expressed](#) growing concern about the cryptocurrency’s environmental impact.

Some crypto advocacy work in Washington is funded by companies that offer virtual currencies built on an alternate verification system, which requires less energy to maintain. In April, Chris Larsen, a billionaire who co-founded the cryptocurrency company Ripple, announced that he was contributing [\\$5 million](#) to a marketing campaign calling on Bitcoin to abandon its energy-guzzling mining infrastructure, which proponents insist is vital to keeping the network secure and equitable.

Now, Bitcoin supporters are building their own political apparatus. This year, David Zell, a Bitcoin advocate, started the Bitcoin Policy Institute, a think tank that pushes a pro-Bitcoin agenda in Washington. The institute has argued that [concerns over Bitcoin’s energy consumption are overblown](#).

“What we’re saying is that Bitcoin has a set of properties that make it unique,” Mr. Zell said. “Those differences are stark enough that if you’re going to have a serious policy conversation around the industry, it’s useful to draw that distinction.”

Mr. Klippsten traces his Bitcoin maximalism to a chance meeting five years ago. (He considers the term “maximalist” to be pejorative and prefers to call himself a Bitcoiner.) A former consultant at McKinsey, Mr. Klippsten became interested in crypto in 2017, when a wave of new currencies were created and prices surged. He bought some Bitcoin, but he also loaded up on newer, experimental tokens.

“I was really distracted by all this other stuff,” he said.

At a conference that October, he met Mr. Song, the Bitcoin podcaster, and was convinced by his pitch. Mr. Klippsten also came to believe that many newer currencies were unregistered securities, more akin to the stocks people trade than to the money used in those transactions. (Regulators have declared Bitcoin a commodity rather than a security.)

In 2019, Mr. Klippsten started Swan Bitcoin, which works with wealthy families, businesses and retail traders to set up Bitcoin investment plans, often through an automatic purchasing program. The firm provides customized financial advice, he said, and charges a 1 percent fee to execute Bitcoin purchases.

The business caters to hard-core Bitcoin believers: Swan customers spent twice as much on Bitcoin in June, the month after the market crash, as they did in April, the month before it, Mr. Klippsten said. He declined to reveal the total figures but said multiple customers made Bitcoin buys of \$5 million in June, as the market fell.

Mr. Klippsten automatically invests a portion of his own savings in Bitcoin every day, a process known as dollar cost averaging. He has continued to buy at the same rate throughout the downturn.

But if he received a windfall, Mr. Klippsten said, he would “argue very vociferously with my wife to try to put the majority of it into Bitcoin.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Taiwan presidential website cyber attack</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/technology/website-taiwans-presidential-office-receives-overseas-cyber-attack-source-2022-08-02/">https://www.reuters.com/technology/website-taiwans-presidential-office-receives-overseas-cyber-attack-source-2022-08-02/</a>
GIST	<p>TAIPEI, Aug 2 (Reuters) - The website of Taiwan's presidential office received an overseas cyber attack on Tuesday and was at one point malfunctioning, a source briefed on the matter said.</p> <p>The website was shortly brought back online, the source told Reuters. U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi was expected to arrive in Taipei later on Tuesday, people briefed on the matter said, as frictions rose across the sensitive Taiwan Strait.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Pro-Russia groups crypto help fund war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/report-pro-russia-groups-raise-2-2-million-in-cryptocurrency-to-fund-war/">https://therecord.media/report-pro-russia-groups-raise-2-2-million-in-cryptocurrency-to-fund-war/</a>
GIST	<p>Both Ukraine and Russia have tapped into cryptocurrency markets to raise money for their military efforts.</p> <p>According to a <a href="#">report</a> published Friday by blockchain research firm Chainalysis, pro-Russian groups have raised \$2.2 million primarily in Bitcoin and Ethereum to help finance the war.</p> <p>Cryptocurrency is an attractive medium of exchange for Russia, which has seen the value of ruble sink in the wake of <a href="#">sanctions</a> and <a href="#">severed access</a> to international payments systems. Digital currencies are also less regulated, and allow people to anonymously transfer money quickly from anywhere in the world.</p>

According to Chainalysis, the funds were sent to 54 pro-Russian groups that primarily used the donations to finance pro-Russian propaganda websites and purchase military equipment, including drones, weapons, bulletproof vests and communication devices.

This equipment was allegedly delivered to Russian troops located in Ukraine's Donbas region, where active fighting is taking place.

The amount of cryptocurrency donations collected by pro-Russian organizations pales in comparison to the amount donated to Ukraine. Since the start of the war, Ukraine's largest charities, including Aid for Ukraine, Come Back Alive and Unchain Fund, have [received](#) over \$135 million in cryptocurrency donations and spent most of them on military equipment and humanitarian aid.

Those groups have spent more than \$14 million on drones, more than \$5 million on military clothing and armor vests, about \$4 million on an anti-war media campaign and \$1 million to buy lethal weapons.

Although the amount of digital currency donations collected by pro-Russia groups is much smaller, those funds could still make "a significant contribution" to its troops' effectiveness, according to Chainalysis.

Researchers from the firm also identified a number of sanctioned individuals who promoted cryptocurrency donations in Russia. Cryptocurrency has been used by a number of organizations and regimes, including [North Korea](#), to evade sanctions.

Russian-national Alexander Zhuchkovsky, for instance, promoted cryptocurrency donations on social media to finance the Russian ultranationalist organization Russian Imperial Movement, which has been designated as a terrorist group by the U.S. Another group that promoted crypto donations, Rusich, has been associated with the Wagner Group, a Russian private military company, also sanctioned by the U.S.

One of Russia's cryptocurrency fundraising campaigns, Project Terricon, received roughly 11% of its funds from mixing services that allow users to hide their activity on the Ethereum blockchain. Project Terricon sent nearly 30% of its funds to Bitzlato – a Moscow-based exchange that has facilitated approximately \$1 billion worth of cryptocurrency money laundering since 2019, according to Chainalysis. While cryptocurrency donations allow countries to raise money quickly, they also have problems.

Cryptocurrencies are rapidly losing value as the price of Bitcoin, the world's most popular virtual currency, continues to fall. The price of Bitcoin has nearly been cut in half over the last year.

Fraud is also an issue. Researchers from TRM Labs [identified](#) dozens of cryptocurrency scams claiming to provide aid to Ukraine.

Russia may also have similar problems with its cryptocurrency donations, where cryptocurrency-related crime is widespread, [according to](#) Chainalysis. The country is home to many services — including Hydra and Suex — that have been involved in money laundering activity, Chainalysis said.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Apps leaking Twitter API keys
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/thousands-of-apps-leaking-twitter/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/thousands-of-apps-leaking-twitter/</a>
GIST	<p>Security researchers have discovered over 3200 mobile apps which are leaking Twitter API keys, potentially enabling threat actors to perform account takeovers.</p> <p>Twitter APIs enable developers to access the social media app in order to embed various bits of its functionality into their own software – for example, enabling gaming apps to post users' top scores direct to their Twitter account.</p>

	<p>Authentication is done via keys or tokens. However, CloudSEK found that on many occasions, developers with limited security know-how accidentally left those keys embedded in the Twitter API.</p> <p>According to the research, they could be abused to perform a range of sensitive actions including: reading direct messages; retweeting; liking; deleting; removing followers; following accounts; and changing display pictures.</p> <p>CloudSEK said it found 3207 apps which leaked a valid Consumer Key and Consumer Secret, potentially allowing malicious actors to build a large army of bot accounts.</p> <p>“Sometimes, these credentials are not removed before deploying it in the production environment. Once the app gets uploaded to the play store, the API secrets are there for anyone to access,” it <a href="#">explained</a>.</p> <p>“A hacker can simply download the app and decompile it to get the API credentials. Thus, from here bulk API keys and tokens can be harvested to prepare the Twitter bot army.”</p> <p>According to the report, this kind of Twitter bot could be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spread misinformation globally</li> <li>• Run large-scale malware campaigns designed to infect compromised account followers</li> <li>• Launch spamming campaigns designed to facilitate investment fraud</li> <li>• Automate phishing designed to enable follow-on social engineering campaigns</li> </ul> <p>CloudSEK urged developers to conduct standardized code reviews, ensure files containing “environment variables” in the source code are not included, and rotate API keys.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 DawDropper malware targets Androids</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/dawdropper-malware-android-devices-play-store/">https://www.hackread.com/dawdropper-malware-android-devices-play-store/</a>
GIST	<p>Trend Micro security researchers have identified over a dozen malicious Android dropper apps containing <a href="#">banking malware</a>. These apps are easily available on Google Play Store.</p> <p>The scam is aimed at stealing users’ banking data to steal money from their banking apps. The stolen data includes PIN codes, banking credentials, passwords, etc. The malware can intercept text and gain complete control of the affected device.</p> <p>Research revealed that DawDropper malware used a third-party cloud service Firebase Realtime Database to <a href="#">evade detection</a> and obtain a payload download address. Additionally, it hosts payloads on GitHub.</p> <p><b>What are Dropper Apps?</b> According to researchers at Trend Micro, cybercriminals are now distributing banking trojans through dropper apps more than ever before because this technique helps them evade detection.</p> <p>Dropper apps carry the malware without raising suspicion at the <a href="#">Google Play Store</a> security mechanism.</p> <p>The apps are named so because of containing a payload comprising malware that these install on the infected handset. Furthermore, mobile malware is highly in demand nowadays as cybercriminals can disseminate their malware on the official Google play store.</p> <p><b>Malicious Apps Details</b> The following are the names of the malicious dropper apps discovered on the Google Play Store:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fix Cleaner</li> <li>• Crypto Utils</li> <li>• Rooster VPN</li> <li>• Extra Cleaner</li> <li>• Lucky Cleaner</li> </ul>

- Simpli Cleaner
- Unicc QR Scanner
- Conquer Darkness
- Call Recorder APK
- Eagle photo editor
- Call recorder pro+
- Universal Saver Pro
- Just In: Video Motion
- Super Cleaner- hyper & smart
- Document Scanner – PDF Creator

According to Trend Micro's [blog post](#), the DawDropper malware's malicious payload has been linked to the Octo malware family. It is a multi-stage, modular malware. Octo is also called Coper and was previously used for targeting Colombian online banking customers. The malicious apps aren't available on Google Play Store anymore.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Spreading uncensored news to Russia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/technology/activists-use-torrents-to-spread-uncensored-news-to-russian-pirates/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/technology/activists-use-torrents-to-spread-uncensored-news-to-russian-pirates/</a>
GIST	<p>A team of Ukrainian cyber-activists has thought of a simple yet potentially effective way to spread uncensored information in Russia: bundling torrents with text and video files pretending to include installation instructions.</p> <p>Named "Torrents of Truth," the initiative is similar to "Call Russia," a project to help break through Russian propaganda and open people's eyes to what's happening in Ukraine.</p> <p>The initiative creates torrents that contain a text file with a list of credible news sources that Russians can trust and instructions on downloading and installing a VPN to secure anonymity from ISPs.</p> <p>Enclosed videos show a graphic representation of the situation in Ukraine, highlighting examples of physical catastrophe and human suffering, the results of a military operation that Russian media present as a liberating intervention.</p> <p>Call Russia was eventually partially mapped and blocked by the Russian state, but torrents are a field that's currently exploding in the country as a method of obtaining content presently unavailable in the country.</p> <p>People use pirated software with the tolerance of the official state, as renewing licenses from software vendors has gotten rather complicated amid the numerous sanctions imposed by western companies.</p> <p>This also applies to entertainment, as even Russian cinemas are now showing pirated Hollywood movies without fearing legal prosecution, and people download TV series episodes from P2P networks in response to the exit of streaming services from the country.</p> <p>The situation has created a fertile ground for Torrents of Truth to reach a sizable userbase without the Russian state having an easy way to stop it.</p> <p>According to Torrents of Truth, about 43% of Russians are currently obtaining their films and shows illegally, so the cyber-action has the potential to target a pool of about 62 million people.</p> <p><b>The torrents</b></p> <p>At this time, Torrents of Truth has bundled 21 torrents with its text and video, selecting just-released movies, the latest episodes of popular shows, and pro-grade software tools.</p>

	<p>The actual content promised by the title appears to be included in the torrent file, so the activists simply sneak in the information they want to push to Russians with it. This also ensures that their torrents won't be reported as fakes and removed from trackers.</p> <p>The torrents are uploaded to popular torrent tracking platforms that pirates use for searching, and thanks to volunteers who seed them aggressively, they rise in popularity and rank high in tracker results.</p> <p>Bleeping Computer advises against participating in P2P swarms sharing pirated content no matter how noble the purpose may appear, as the action still violates copyright laws.</p> <p>If you would like to help the project in some way while staying within legal limits, you could selectively download and seed the video and text files only.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Cyberattack against European gas pipeline</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/blackcat-ransomware-claims-attack-on-european-gas-pipeline/?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/blackcat-ransomware-claims-attack-on-european-gas-pipeline/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>The ALPHV ransomware gang, aka BlackCat, claimed responsibility for a cyberattack against Creos Luxembourg S.A. last week, a natural gas pipeline and electricity network operator in the central European country.</p> <p>Creos' owner, Encevo, who operates as an energy supplier in five EU countries, <a href="#">announced on July 25</a> that they had suffered a cyberattack the previous weekend, between July 22 and 23.</p> <p>While the cyberattack had resulted in the customer portals of Encevo and Creos becoming unavailable, there was no interruption in the provided services.</p> <p>On July 28, the company <a href="#">posted an update</a> on the cyberattack, with the initial results of their investigation indicating that the network intruders had exfiltrated "a certain amount of data" from the accessed systems.</p> <p>At that time, Encevo wasn't in a position to estimate the scope of the impact and kindly asked customers to be patient until the investigations were concluded, at which time everyone would receive a personalized notice.</p> <p>Since no further updates have been posted on Encevo's media portal, this procedure is likely still underway. Encevo says that when more information becomes available, it will be posted on <a href="#">a dedicated webpage for the cyberattack</a>.</p> <p>For now, all customers are recommended to reset their online account credentials, which they used for interacting with Encevo and Creos services. Furthermore, if those passwords are the same at other sites, customers should change their passwords on those sites as well.</p> <p>Bleeping Computer has contacted Creos to request more information about the impact of the cyberattack, but a spokesperson of the firm declined to give any comment at this stage.</p> <p><b>BlackCat strikes gas again</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">ALPHV/BlackCat</a> ransomware group added Creos to its extortion site on Saturday, threatening to publish 180,000 stolen files totaling 150 GB in size, including contracts, agreements, passports, bills, and emails.</p> <p>While no exact time was announced for the fulfillment of this threat, the hackers vowed the disclosure to occur later today (Monday).</p>



	<p>ALPHV/BlackCat has recently launched a new extortion platform where they make stolen data <a href="#">searchable</a> by visitors, with the goal being to increase pressure on their victims to make them pay a ransom.</p> <p>While BlackCat continues to innovate data extortion, they never seem to learn from their mistakes and continue to target high-profile companies that will likely land them in the cross-hairs of international law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>BlackCat is believed to be a rebrand DarkSide operation, which <a href="#">shut down under pressure from law enforcement</a> following its highly-publicized <a href="#">ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline</a>.</p> <p>After shutting down DarkSide, they rebranded as BlackMatter to evade law enforcement, but the pressure continued with the gang shutting down again.</p> <p>Since November 2021, when the threat actors relaunched as BlackCat/ALPHV, the threat actors tend to avoid big American targets and target European entities instead, like <a href="#">Austrian states</a>, <a href="#">Italian fashion chains</a>, and a <a href="#">Swiss airport service provider</a>.</p> <p>However, it appears that they have not learned from their mistakes and continue to attack critical infrastructure, such as the German petrol supply firm <a href="#">Oiltanking</a> in February and now Creos Luxembourg.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Cybercriminals flocking to Telegram</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://intel471.com/blog/telegram-cybercrime-underground-forums?&amp;web_view=true">https://intel471.com/blog/telegram-cybercrime-underground-forums?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Messaging platforms like Telegram provide a way for cybercriminals to host, distribute, and execute various functions that ultimately allow them to steal credentials or other information from unsuspecting users. Yet that isn't the only way in which cybercriminals have leveraged Telegram for their operations.</p> <p>Given research done into why Telegram has been growing in use among cybercriminals, Intel 471 analyzed what makes the messaging service an efficient alternative to popular underground forums, especially when it comes to the market for compromised access and data. Researchers found that a combination of simplicity and security found in Telegram has provided a perfect communications hub for attackers: cybercriminals can message others individually or in groups, as well as receive or send large data files. Telegram also offers actors the ability to create bespoke channels for specific interests that are not typically active on cyber underground forums. This enables threat actors to conduct criminal operations by forming and joining groups and channels that align with their interests and goals.</p> <p><b>Criminals need easy comms</b></p> <p>Of the cybercriminal groups Intel 471 has observed, Telegram is considered the preferred method of anonymous communication as opposed to in-forum messaging services monitored by administrators. Telegram provides actors with near real-time encrypted communication if both parties are online simultaneously, whereas in-forum messaging requires waiting for unencrypted mail notifications. This lag time, along with other security risks associated with forum communications, regularly encourage actors to provide other contact details in forum advertisements, such as email addresses and Telegram IDs.</p> <p>Additionally, threat actors conveniently can remain in the Telegram application for multiple levels of communication. For instance, a Telegram user can use the same handle to access both individual private messages and group and channel communications, a feature that most messaging platforms have that's not been integrated to forum communications. The messaging service also allows threat actors to bypass the need for a web host or domain service that potentially would leave them vulnerable to distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks. The actor responsible for the X-Files malware we covered in our previous blog uses Telegram in this manner, on top of using the platform to launch and operate the malware itself.</p> <p><b>How different regions are using Telegram</b></p>

Where threat actors live and the language they speak can significantly influence the decision to use underground forums or Telegram-like services. For example, Chinese threat actors likely leverage Telegram to evade attention from law enforcement since most Chinese cybercrime forums and domestic IM platforms, such as WeChat or QQ, are monitored by regional authorities. However, there are some reasons Asia-based threat actors are hesitant to join Telegram: A new application called Session Manager is increasing in popularity since it does not require personal information to register for an account. Additionally, WeChat and QQ remain popular communication platforms for China-based threat actors since they have ways to send payments inside the platform, a feature Telegram lacks.

We also observed actors gradually abandon Arabic and Persian-language forums over the last few years, mainly in favor of Telegram channels and groups. Threat actors possibly left language-specific forums after recognizing other messaging and underground forums were more popular. They likely assumed Telegram would provide a larger base of followers that would help boost their services' capabilities. It also is possible actors in countries with strict internet usage policies, such as Iran, realized Telegram could offer additional operational security (OPSEC) protection and therefore decrease the likelihood of being doxxed.

Aside from financially-motivated cybercriminals, hacktivists are also moving to Telegram. Groups that previously were noted to use Facebook and Twitter to advertise defacements and other activity recently were observed using Telegram as their primary communication application. The hacktivist group Jerusalem Electronic Army had a presence on Facebook, but now mostly posts on Telegram. Similarly, the 1877 Team, a hacktivist group believed to be operating in Iraq, has a Facebook and Twitter presence but primarily operates on Telegram. We observed several older groups that used Facebook are inactive and new groups have emerged via Telegram. While Facebook and Twitter now have policies to disable group accounts that promote illicit activity, Telegram does not, which makes it a stable choice for actors to post any content without the risk of being banned.

### **The new cybercrime marketplace**

While Telegram does not have a direct payment option built into the platform, its simple structure makes it a go-to option for cybercriminals seeking a basic yet effective method to manage and engage in illicit business. Several actors and groups use Telegram to mobilize their operations, offering malware logs, compromised accounts and stolen data.

In March 2022, an actor that specializes in selling compromised bank accounts via a Telegram-based channel alongside the same offerings they had posted on the WWH-Club forum. The actor promoted several other services on Telegram, including a short message service (SMS) spam offering and compromised payment card data with cardholder records.

In May 2022, another actor launched a compromised payment card data shop and promoted it on the actor's dedicated Telegram channel, which had more than 3,300 members at the time of this report. The Telegram channel was created about a year and a half before the shop was launched, allowing the actor to promote additional products, services or goods available at the time.

Another India-based actor was an administrator of multiple Telegram channels with thousands of followers at the time of this report. Marketplaces the actor operated included the provision of compromised credit cards, escrow and cashout services and video tutorials. The actor also used Telegram groups for backups of operations.

### **Not a total exodus**

Even with the rise in Telegram's use, threat actors will continue to remain connected to underground forums. The already-established forums still provide additional features that allow actors to build reputations via built-in scoring systems – a popular feature among cybercriminals that Telegram currently lacks. Additionally, while in the past Telegram has taken a laissez-faire approach to privacy policies and has refused to cooperate with law enforcement, the company changed course in 2022, reinforcing its policy on removing personal data that is shared on the platform without consent. It is possible additional

	oversight, content moderation and amended platform policies could result in cybercriminals seeking alternative messaging platforms in the future.
	Yet, as cybercriminals find themselves making more money by using the service, we expect Telegram to remain a key communication tool among threat actors.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Dark web credit card fraud ongoing problem</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.techrepublic.com/article/dark-web-credit-card-fraud-less-pervasive-but-still-an-ongoing-problem/?web_view=true">https://www.techrepublic.com/article/dark-web-credit-card-fraud-less-pervasive-but-still-an-ongoing-problem/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Stolen credit card data is always a hot item for sale on the <a href="#">Dark Web</a>, particularly if the package includes not just the card number but the expiration date and CVV code. To crack down on fraud, card vendors have long since turned away from stripe-only cards to those with embedded security chips that not only use encryption to secure transactions but are more difficult to clone. A recent report from cyber intelligence provider Cybersixgill looks at the current state of credit card fraud on the Dark Web.</p> <p>For its “<a href="#">Underground Financial Fraud H1 2022 report</a>,” Cybersixgill found that more than 4.5 million stolen payment cards were up for sale on the Dark Web during the first half of 2022. Though this number is a significant drop of 68% from the more than 14 million such cards discovered during the last half of 2021, this still represents a substantial amount of fraud.</p> <p>Almost half (45%) of the cards for sale on underground markets were issued in the United States. One likely reason is because the U.S. is home to more than 1 billion credit cards. An American consumer owns <a href="#">four credit cards on average</a>, compared with citizens in the European Union who own one or two cards, according to Experian.</p> <p>However, another factor may be the impact of EMV cards, or chip cards. Outfitted with an embedded security chip, such cards better protect consumers against theft and compromise than do cards with just a magnetic stripe.</p> <p>Research cited by Cybersixgill indicates that European countries are hit by less credit card fraud because they jumped on the EMV bandwagon earlier than their American counterparts.</p> <p>On the other side of the fence, Russian credit cards are much less common on the Dark Web, with only around 5,400 cards seen for sale during the first half of 2022. The reason, says Cybersixgill, is that cybercriminals who operate in Russia often do so without much objection from the Kremlin as long as Russian citizens aren’t targeted.</p> <p>Cybercriminals rely on a few tactics to capture credit card information. Some will target e-commerce sites through data breaches or phishing attacks where they’re able to steal the necessary data. Others will physically install skimmers on ATMs, sales terminals and gas station pumps. After stealing the credit card details, the crooks will typically sell them on the Dark Web where other criminals will buy and use them to commit fraud.</p> <p>Most of the stolen credit cards seen on the Dark Web during the first half of the year were issued by the four major networks. Some 49% came from Visa cards, 36% from Mastercard, 13% from American Express and 2.5% from Discover. Cards sold with CVV or CVV2 numbers are more lucrative and therefore more common on the Dark Web than are cards sold as dumps, which are electronic copies of the information from the magnetic stripe on the card but without the CVV data. Further, stolen cards with the CVV numbers may also include the user’s address, email and other sensitive information that can be used for identity fraud and account takeovers.</p> <p>“Despite continued efforts by law enforcement agencies, credit card networks, banks, and retailers to improve security, fraudsters are expected to adapt and evolve their skills and techniques, finding new</p>

	methods to exfiltrate sensitive payment credentials from cards being utilized both virtually and physically,” Cybersixgill said in its report.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Data centers facing a climate crisis</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/data-centers-climate-change/">https://www.wired.com/story/data-centers-climate-change/</a>
GIST	<p><b>WHEN RECORD TEMPERATURES</b> wracked the UK in late July, Google Cloud’s data centers in London <a href="#">went offline</a> for a day, due to cooling failures. The impact wasn’t limited to those near the center: That particular location services customers in the US and Pacific region, with outages limiting their access to key Google services for hours. Oracle’s cloud-based data center in the capital was also struck down by the heat, causing <a href="#">outages for US customers</a>. Oracle blamed “unseasonal temperatures” for the blackout. The UK Met Office, which monitors the weather, suggests that the record heat was an augur of things to come, which means data centers need to prepare for a new normal.</p> <p>The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) says there’s a <a href="#">93 percent chance</a> that one year between now and 2026 will be the hottest on record. Nor will that be a one-off. “For as long as we continue to emit greenhouse gases, temperatures will continue to rise,” says Petteri Taalas, WMO secretary general. “And alongside that, our oceans will continue to become warmer and more acidic, sea ice and glaciers will continue to melt, sea level will continue to rise, and our weather will become more extreme.”</p> <p>That weather shift will have an impact on all human-made infrastructure—including the data centers that keep our planet’s collective knowledge online.</p> <p>The question is whether they are prepared. “From my point of view, there is an issue with existing data center stock that’s been built in the UK and Europe,” says Simon Harris, head of critical infrastructure at data center consultancy Business Critical Solutions. But it doesn’t stop there. <a href="#">Forty-five percent</a> of US data centers have experienced an extreme weather event that threatened their ability to operate, according to a survey by the Uptime Institute, a digital services standards agency.</p> <p>Data center cooling systems are built using a complicated, multi-stage process, says Sophia Flucker, director at UK data center consulting firm Operational Intelligence. This may include analyzing temperature data from a weather station close to the point where the data center will be built.</p> <p>The problem? That data is historical and represents a time when temperatures in the UK didn’t hit 40 degrees Celsius. “We’re on the fringes of a changing climate,” says Harris.</p> <p>“It wasn’t that long ago that we were designing cooling systems for a peak outdoor temperature of 32 degrees,” says Jon Healy, of the UK data center consultancy Keysource. “They’re over 8 degrees higher than they were ever designed for.” The design conditions are being increasingly elevated—but data center companies, and the clients they’re working for, operate as profit-driven enterprises. Data from consultancy Turner &amp; Townsend suggests that the cost of building data centers <a href="#">has risen</a> in almost every market in recent years, and construction companies are advised to keep costs down.</p> <p>“If we went from 32 degrees to 42 degrees, blimey,” says Healy. “You’re having to make everything significantly larger to support that very small percentage of the year” when temperatures rise. “It’s got to be done with caution.”</p> <p>Data center design companies are starting to consider the historical weather information outmoded and beginning to use projected future temperatures, says Flucker. “Rather than thinking my extreme is 35 degrees, they’re doing projections saying maybe it’s more like 37 or 38 degrees,” she says. “But of course, that’s only as good as how well we can predict the future.”</p> <p>Flucker points out that data centers rarely operate at full capacity—although Cushman &amp; Wakefield research shows that <a href="#">eight data center markets</a> worldwide out of 55 they investigated operate at 95 percent or higher capacity—and at present, they’re only strained at the highest temperatures for a small number of days a year. Data centers that don’t operate at 100 percent capacity can cope better with high external</p>

temperatures because equipment failure is less likely to have an all-or-nothing impact on performance. But that will almost certainly change as the climate emergency begins to permanently alter our environmental temperatures and the margin for error narrows.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has developed operating temperature [guidelines](#) for data processing equipment, such as the servers integral to data centers. The limits suggest air pumped through data centers be supplied at no more than 27 degrees Celsius—though there are allowable ranges beyond that. “The world doesn’t end,” says Flucker. “All this equipment is warranted up to 32 degrees Celsius.” But with temperatures continuing to rise, data centers need to make changes.

“There are a deceptively large number of legacy data center sites built by banks and financial services companies needing to be refreshed and refitted,” says Harris. As part of that rethink, Harris advises companies to look at design criteria that can cope with climate change, rather than solely minimizing its effects. “It’ll be bigger chiller machines, machines with bigger condensers, and looking more at machines that use evaporative cooling to achieve the performance criteria needed to ensure that for those days things are still in a good place,” he says.

Companies are testing some unusual ways to tackle these challenges: Between 2018 and 2020 Microsoft ran [Project Natick](#), which sunk a data center 117 feet below the sea offshore Scotland to insulate it from temperature fluctuations, among other things. Harris says that building data centers in ever more northern climates could be one way to avoid the heat—by trying to outrun it—but this comes with its own problems. “Developers will be fighting over an ever-dwindling pool of potential sites,” he says, a challenge when edge computing puts data centers ever closer to the point at which data is consumed, often in hotter, urban areas.

Liquid cooling technology offers a more practical solution. Data centers are currently in an era of air-based cooling, but liquid cooling—where liquid is passed by equipment, transferring the heat and syphoning it away—could be a better way to keep temperatures down. However, it isn’t widely used because it requires a combined knowledge of cooling and IT equipment. “At the moment, these are two very separate worlds,” says Flucker. “There’s definitely some apprehension about making such a big change in how we do things.”

But it may well be necessary—not least because it sets up a virtuous circle. Outside of the IT equipment itself, the next-biggest consumer of energy in data centers is the equipment used to keep it cool. “If we can move away from the traditional way of doing things,” says Flucker, “it’s preventing climate change in the first place.”

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## Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	08/02 Global scrutiny on Taliban intensifies
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-al-qaida-ayman-zawahri-middle-east-taliban-2705b6638b8389e67624ad5e62b4781c">https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-al-qaida-ayman-zawahri-middle-east-taliban-2705b6638b8389e67624ad5e62b4781c</a>
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD (AP) — The U.S. drone strike that killed al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri on the balcony of a Kabul safe house intensified global scrutiny Tuesday of Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers and further undermined their efforts to secure international recognition and desperately needed aid.</p> <p>The Taliban had promised in the 2020 Doha Agreement on the terms of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan that they would not harbor al-Qaida members. Nearly a year after the U.S. military’s chaotic pullout from Afghanistan, al-Zawahri’s killing raises questions about the involvement of Taliban leaders in sheltering a mastermind of the 9/11 terror attacks and one of America’s most-wanted fugitives.</p>

The safe house is in Kabul's upscale Shirpur neighborhood, home to several Taliban leaders who had moved into mansions of former top Afghan officials of the toppled Western-backed government.

The Taliban initially sought to describe the strike as America violating the Doha deal, which also includes a Taliban pledge not to shelter those seeking to attack the United States — something al-Zawahri had done for years in internet videos and online screeds. The Taliban have yet to say who was killed in the strike.

Meanwhile, rumors persist of unease in the Taliban ranks — particularly between the powerful group known as the Haqqani network, which apparently sheltered al-Zawahri, and other Taliban figures.

"The killing of Ayman al-Zawahri has raised many questions," said one Pakistani intelligence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press as he wasn't authorized to speak publicly to reporters. Al-Zawahri took over as al-Qaida's leader after Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan in 2011, in an operation by U.S. Navy SEALs.

"The Taliban were aware of his presence in Kabul, and if they were not aware of it, they need to explain their position," the official said.

The strike early Sunday shook awake Shirpur, once home to historic buildings bulldozed in 2003 to make way for luxury homes for officials in Afghanistan's Western-backed government and international aid organizations. After the U.S. withdrawal in August 2021, the Taliban elite began taking some of the abandoned homes there.

The house where al-Zawahri stayed was the home of a top aide to senior Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani, according to a senior U.S. intelligence official. Taliban officials blocked AP journalists in Kabul from reaching the damaged house on Tuesday.

The U.N. Security Council was informed by monitors of militant groups in July that al-Qaida enjoys greater freedom in Afghanistan under the Taliban, but confines itself to advising and supporting the country's new rulers.

A report by the monitors said the two groups remain close and that al-Qaida fighters, estimated to number between 180 to 400, are represented "at the individual level" among Taliban combat units.

The monitors said it's unlikely al-Qaida will seek to mount direct attacks outside Afghanistan, "owing to a lack of capability and restraint on the part of the Taliban, as well as an unwillingness to jeopardize their recent gains" such as having a safe haven and improved resources.

During the first half of 2022, al-Zawahri increasingly reached out to supporters with video and audio messages, including assurances that al-Qaida can compete with the Islamic State group for leadership of a global movement, the report by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team said.

IS militants have emerged as a major threat to the Taliban over the past year, carrying out a series of deadly attacks against Taliban targets and civilians.

The Haqqani network is an Afghan Islamic insurgent group, built around the family of the same name. In the 1980s, it fought Soviet forces and over the past 20 years, it battled U.S.-led NATO troops and the former Afghanistan government.

Sirajuddin Haqqani has also served as the first deputy leader of the Taliban movement since 2016. Since last August, he also served the appointed interior ministry of the Taliban government. The U.S. government maintains a \$10 million bounty on him for "numerous significant kidnappings and attacks against U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan, the Afghan government and civilian targets."

But the Haqqanis, from Afghanistan's eastern Khost province, have disagreed with others in the Taliban leadership, mostly from the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar. Some believe Sirajuddin



Haqqani wants more power. Other Taliban figures have opposed the Haqqanis' violent attacks against civilians in Kabul and elsewhere.

"It seems to me that the power struggle within the Taliban is general. It's not necessarily about the U.S. or about the international community. It's about the new regime, how to share power within the new regime, who gets what position, who gets to control what ministries, to decide the general policies and so on," said Jerome Drevon, the International Crisis Group's senior analyst studying Islamist militant groups.

"It's not that surprising that the building would be owned by the Haqqani family. ... That creates a tension between what the Taliban movement is, especially in terms of how it's trying to reach out to the international community, to normalize itself and so on," he said.

The timing of the strike also couldn't come at a worse time politically for the Taliban. The militants face international condemnation for refusing to reopen schools for girls above the sixth grade, despite earlier promises. The United Nations mission to Afghanistan also criticized the Taliban for human rights abuses under their rule.

The U.S. and its allies have cut off billions in development funds that kept the government afloat in part over the abuses, as well as froze billions in Afghan national assets.

This sent the already shattered economy into free fall, increasing poverty dramatically and creating one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Millions, struggling to feed their families, are kept alive by a massive U.N.-led relief effort.

The Taliban have been trying to reopen the taps to that aid and their reserves. However, al-Zawahri's killing already has been seized upon by the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken as a sign that the Taliban "grossly violated the Doha Agreement and repeated assurances ... that they would not allow Afghan territory to be used by terrorists to threaten the security of other countries."

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid alleged the U.S. violated the Doha Agreement by launching the strike. Afghanistan's state-run television channel — now under the Taliban — reported that President Joe Biden said al-Zawahri had been killed.

"The killing of Ayman al-Zawahri closes a chapter of al-Qaida," said Imtiaz Gul, the executive director of the Islamabad-based Center for Research and Security Studies.

In the Mideast, al-Zawahri's killing coincided with the 32nd anniversary of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, which sparked U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia — the same presence that bin Laden pointed to in launching the 9/11 attacks. Anwar Gargash, a senior diplomat in the United Arab Emirates, noted the timing.

It's "a chance for the region to contemplate and reflect on the absurdity of extremism, terrorism and reckless military adventures and how all of this frayed (the region's) fabric," Gargash wrote on Twitter. The "lessons and teachings are present, and hope rests on the countries of the region uniting together to guarantee security and shared development."

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HEADLINE	08/02 Key: building al-Zawahiri 'pattern of life'
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theintelligencer.com/news/article/Watching-al-Qaida-chief-s-pattern-of-life-key-17344350.php">https://www.theintelligencer.com/news/article/Watching-al-Qaida-chief-s-pattern-of-life-key-17344350.php</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — As the sun was rising in Kabul on Sunday, two Hellfire missiles fired by a U.S. drone ended Ayman al-Zawahri's decade-long reign as the leader of al-Qaida. The seeds of the audacious counterterrorism operation had been planted over many months.</p> <p>U.S. officials had built a scale model of the safe house where al-Zawahri had been located, and brought it into the White House Situation Room to show President Joe Biden. They knew al-Zawahri was partial to sitting on the home's balcony.</p>

They had painstakingly constructed “a pattern of life,” as one official put it. They were confident he was on the balcony when the missiles flew, officials said.

Years of efforts by U.S. intelligence operatives under four presidents to track al-Zawahri and his associates paid dividends earlier this year, Biden said, when they located Osama bin Laden’s longtime No. 2 — a co-planner of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S. — and ultimate successor at the house in Kabul.

Bin Laden’s death came in May 2011, face to face with a U.S. assault team led by Navy SEALs. Al-Zawahri’s death came from afar, at 6:18 a.m. in Kabul.

His family, supported by the Haqqani Taliban network, had taken up residence in the home after the Taliban regained control of the country last year, following the withdrawal of U.S. forces after nearly 20 years of combat that had been intended, in part, to keep al-Qaida from regaining a base of operations in Afghanistan.

But the lead on his whereabouts was only the first step. Confirming al-Zawahri’s identity, devising a strike in a crowded city that wouldn’t recklessly endanger civilians, and ensuring the operation wouldn’t set back other U.S. priorities took months to fall into place.

That effort involved independent teams of analysts reaching similar conclusions about the probability of al-Zawahri’s presence, the scale mock-up and engineering studies of the building to evaluate the risk to people nearby, and the unanimous recommendation of Biden’s advisers to go ahead with the strike.

“Clear and convincing,” Biden called the evidence. “I authorized the precision strike that would remove him from the battlefield once and for all. This measure was carefully planned, rigorously, to minimize the risk of harm to other civilians.”

The consequences of getting it wrong on this type of judgment call were devastating a year ago this month, when a U.S. drone strike during the chaotic withdrawal of American forces killed 10 innocent family members, seven of them children.

Biden ordered what officials called a “tailored airstrike,” designed so that the two missiles would destroy only the balcony of the safe house where the terrorist leader was holed up for months, sparing occupants elsewhere in the building.

A senior U.S. administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the strike planning, said al-Zawahri was identified on “multiple occasions, for sustained periods of time” on the balcony where he died.

The official said “multiple streams of intelligence” convinced U.S. analysts of his presence, having eliminated “all reasonable options” other than his being there.

Two senior national security officials were first briefed on the intelligence in early April, with the president being briefed by national security adviser Jake Sullivan shortly thereafter. Through May and June, a small circle of officials across the government worked to vet the intelligence and devise options for Biden.

On July 1 in the White House Situation Room, after returning from a five-day trip to Europe, Biden was briefed on the proposed strike by his national security aides. It was at that meeting, the official said, that Biden viewed the model of the safe house and peppered advisers, including CIA Director William Burns, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines and National Counterterrorism Center director Christy Abizaid, with questions about their conclusion that al-Zawahri was hiding there.

Biden, the official said, also pressed officials to consider the risks the strike could pose to American Mark Frerichs, who has been in Taliban captivity for more than two years, and to Afghans who aided the U.S.

war efforts who remain in the country. U.S. lawyers also considered the legality of the strike, concluding that al-Zawahri's continued leadership of the terrorist group and support for al-Qaida attacks made him a lawful target.

The official said al-Zawahri had built an organizational model that allowed him to lead the global network even from relative isolation. That included filming videos from the house, and the U.S. believes some may be released after his death.

On July 25, as Biden was isolated in the White House residence with COVID-19, he received a final briefing from his team.

Each of the officials participating strongly recommended the operation's approval, the official said, and Biden gave the sign-off for the strike as soon as an opportunity was available.

That unanimity was lacking a decade earlier when Biden, as vice president, gave President Barack Obama advice he did not take — to hold off on the bin Laden strike, according Obama's memoirs.

The opportunity came early Sunday — late Saturday in Washington — hours after Biden again found himself in isolation with a rebound case of the coronavirus. He was informed when the operation began and when it concluded, the official said.

A further 36 hours of intelligence analysis would follow before U.S. officials began sharing that al-Zawahri was killed, as they watched the Haqqani Taliban network restrict access to the safe house and relocate the dead al-Qaida leader's family. U.S. officials interpreted that as the Taliban trying to conceal the fact they had harbored al-Zawahri.

After last year's troop withdrawal, the U.S. was left with fewer bases in the region to collect intelligence and carry out strikes on terrorist targets. It was not clear from where the drone carrying the missiles was launched or whether countries it flew over were aware of its presence.

The U.S. official said no American personnel were on the ground in Kabul supporting the strike and the Taliban was provided with no forewarning of the attack.

In remarks 11 month ago, Biden had said the U.S. would keep up the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and other countries, despite pulling out troops. "We just don't need to fight a ground war to do it."

"We have what's called over-the-horizon capabilities," he said.

On Sunday, the missiles came over the horizon.

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HEADLINE	08/02 'Flying Ginsu' missile killed al-Zawahiri?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.freepressjournal.in/world/cutting-edge-us-made-ninja-missile-used-to-kill-al-qaedas-zawahiri">https://www.freepressjournal.in/world/cutting-edge-us-made-ninja-missile-used-to-kill-al-qaedas-zawahiri</a>
GIST	<p>Reports have begun to emerge that the US military used a warhead-less missile, believed equipped with six razor-like blades extending from the fuselage that slices through its target, but does not explode, to kill Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri.</p> <p>The R9X is a Hellfire missile variant with a kinetic warhead with pop-out blades instead of explosives, used against specific human targets; its lethality is due to 45 kg of dense material with six blades flying at high speed, to crush and slice the targeted person—it has been called the 'Ninja bomb' and the 'Flying Ginsu'.</p> <p>With no high explosives used in the Hellfire R9X missile, no blast is created, thereby minimizing the risk of collateral damage and civilian casualties.</p>

Never publicly acknowledged by the Pentagon or CIA -- the two US agencies known to undertake targeted assassinations of extremist leaders -- the R9X first appeared in March 2017 when Al-Qaeda senior leader Abu al-Khayr al-Masri was killed by a drone strike while travelling in a car in Syria.

Zawahiri was killed in a US strike in Afghanistan over the weekend, the biggest blow to the terrorist group since its founder Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011.

Zawahiri had been in hiding for years and the operation to locate and kill him was the result of "careful patient and persistent" work by the counter-terrorism and intelligence community, a senior administration official told reporters.

Until the US announcement, Zawahiri had been rumored variously to be in Pakistan's tribal area or inside Afghanistan.

### **What is the R9X missile?**

In the last few years, the US military has carried out a series of airstrikes using a secretive weapon.

To this day, the US authorities have made barely any public statements about the R9X Hellfire missile. It appears to be used as a targeted assassination weapon against high-value targets: commanders and other prominent individuals.

Over the last four years there have only been 11 confirmed cases involving the weapon. Many of these took place in Syria, although the R9X missile is believed to have been used in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

At first glance, the R9X missile, described as "a weapon that combines medieval brutality with advanced technology," by the *Wall Street Journal*, appears to be an important breakthrough in the U.S. counter-terrorism arsenal.

Despite its Hellfire connotation, the R9X missile is more like a long-range sniper round than its explosive cousins. The payload allows a drone operator based in the United States to target terrorist leaders anywhere in the world to an accuracy of only a few feet, and potentially without any collateral damage.

A former US official expressed hopes the weapon could even solve a "right seat, left seat" problem, with the missile, in fact, being capable of discriminately targeting passengers in a moving vehicle.

But there are downsides, including a failure to adequately address ethical and human rights questions and a lack of clarity about if it can be deployed effectively in future battles.

### **Missile was developed to kill bin Laden**

The six-bladed configuration has reportedly earned the nicknames "ninja bomb" and "the flying Ginsu," the latter being a reference to a brand of knives sold through television infomercials starting in the 1970s.

The advertisements featured energetic pitchmen slicing through everything from fruits and vegetables to wood blocks and commercial plastic piping.

The weapon was developed under the Obama administration to reduce civilian casualties from US counter-terrorism strikes abroad, and a similar missile was considered for the successful mission in 2011 that killed then al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden

The Al Qaeda founder was regularly surrounded by family members, including women and children, presenting a need for extreme precision in any possible air strike.

The specialized Hellfire could have made it easier to confirm Bin Laden's death, including through subsequent DNA collection, something that U.S. personnel reportedly did following the 2011 raid.

HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Key Al-Shabab leaders killed in attacks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://peoplesdispatch.org/2022/08/01/key-al-shabaab-leaders-killed-in-attacks-along-ethiopia-somalia-border/">https://peoplesdispatch.org/2022/08/01/key-al-shabaab-leaders-killed-in-attacks-along-ethiopia-somalia-border/</a>
GIST	<p>Al-Shabaab's key financier, Fuad Mohamed Khalaf aka Shongole, <a href="#">sanctioned by the UN</a> since 2010 and carrying on his head a <a href="#">five million dollar bounty</a> offered by the US in 2012, was <a href="#">reportedly</a> killed on the Ethiopia-Somalia border on Friday, July 29. Al-Shabaab is an Al-Qaeda affiliated Islamist extremist organization.</p> <p>Ubada Nur Isse, who heads Al-Shabaab's forces deployed on the Ethiopian border, and spokesperson AbdulAziz Abu Musa were also killed, according to Major General Tesfaye Ayalew, head of deployment department of Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF).</p> <p>These Al-Shabaab leaders were killed along with <a href="#">at least 150 fighters</a> in fierce hours-long battles after the ENDF and Ethiopia's Somali regional State's special forces responded to yet another attack on the towns of Aato and Yeed. The two towns in southwestern Bakool region of Somalia along the Ethiopian border are protected by security forces of Ethiopia's southeastern Somali regional State as per the bilateral security arrangements between the governments of Ethiopia and Somalia.</p> <p>Later that night, Ayalew said, "The terrorist group regrouped its scattered forces and tried to infiltrate into Ethiopia and.. attack.. the area bordering Somalia." Several airstrikes targeted Al-Shabaab's vehicles on <a href="#">July 29</a> and <a href="#">July 30</a> in the towns of Garasley and Lagalaay in Somalia.</p> <p><b>Al Shabaab's first successful attack on Ethiopia</b></p> <p>The fighting began on July 20, when Al-Shabaab launched simultaneous attacks on four different towns in Somalia along the Ethiopian border. The two towns of Yeed and Aato were run over by its fighters who killed 14 Ethiopian policemen and three civilians. Several observers noted that this was the first successful attack by Al Shabaab so close to the Ethiopian border. Security forces claimed to have killed 63 Al-Shabab fighters in battles that day. They also seized several machine guns and vehicles, and wrested back control of the towns.</p> <p>Later that night and on July 21, while the fighting was still underway, an estimated 500 other fighters crossed over the Ethiopian border from Somalia's Bakool region. According to Mohamed Abdi Tall, the governor of this region, the fighters <a href="#">crossed the Ethiopian border in two units</a>.</p> <p>One unit crossing through Aato was intercepted by the Ethiopian security forces, but managed to break through, leaving behind most of their vehicles. The insurgents made it further into the Afder Zone of Ethiopia's Somali State and briefly captured the town of Hulhul, where they were surrounded and defeated by July 23 after a three-day long battle.</p> <p>More than 100 Al-Shabaab fighters were killed, "13 vehicles were burnt and the weapons and supplies they brought with them were confiscated," according to a <a href="#">statement</a> by Somali regional State's security council on July 24.</p> <p>Another incursion attempt into Ethiopia from the Hiran region of central Somalia was also foiled that day by Somali regional State's forces who claimed to have <a href="#">killed 85 insurgents</a>.</p> <p>The statement by Somali regional State's security council went on to attribute the success of the operations to the people of the State who "stood by the special forces by donating various foods, livestock, drinks, clothes and blood."</p> <p>No clarification has yet been given officially about the second unit, which according to Tall had crossed into Ethiopia from the east of the El Barde town in Somalia's Bakool region.</p> <p><b>The many wars</b></p>

The security council said that the objective of the Al-Shabaab fighters was to cross over Ethiopia's Somali region, which is the country's second largest State, into its largest State, Oromia, to join the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). OLA, which is the armed wing of the ethnic separatist group Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), is designated as a terrorist outfit in Ethiopia, at war with the federal government.

On June 18, the OLA reportedly massacred hundreds of ethnic Amharans in Tole Kebele in Oromia's West Wollega zone. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) had initially estimated that [over 200 Amharan civilians](#) had been killed. Amnesty International later reported that the [death toll was over 400](#). With most male folk having left their homes for work when the attack began at around nine in the morning, women and children made up most of the victims.

The West Wollega zone in Oromia borders the Gambella regional State, whose capital Gambella city was attacked earlier that week jointly by the OLA and another ethnic separatist organization, the Gambella Liberation Front (GLF).

The OLA has also been in alliance with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) since 2021. The TPLF started the civil war in northern Ethiopia by attacking an ENDF base in Tigray State's capital Mekelle in November 2020. Now nearing two years, this war was started by the TPLF with the backing and at the instigation of the Joe Biden administration that was incoming into US White House at the time, according former Ethiopian diplomat and historian Mohamed Hassan.

The US had been a key ally of the TPLF during the decades of its authoritarian rule over Ethiopia from 1990-2018, when all parties outside of the coalition it led were banned and no free press was allowed. It was under TPLF's leadership that Ethiopia was broken down into a loose federation of regional States organized along ethnic lines, each commanding ethnic militias of its own. During the TPLF's rule, organizations like the OLA were up in arms against the government.

However, following Abiy Ahmed's rise to power as the prime minister after pro-democracy protests ousted TPLF from power in 2018, the secular Ethiopian nationalism he espoused to transcend the ethnic divisions in the country threatened a plethora of such ethnic extremist formations. Thus, despite Ahmed himself being a member of the majority Oromia ethnicity, the OLA, which represents an extremist movement within the Oromia, saw in his government a greater threat and allied with the TPLF.

On July 28, TPLF chairman Debretsion Gebremichael said that his group would resume fighting if the federal government does not fulfill their preconditions for negotiation. The key among them is the return of Wolkait region to TPLF's control. Ceding Wolkait, which the TPLF calls Western Tigray, would give it access to Sudan, whose military junta is known is to be backing the TPLF.

Originally a part of Amhara, Wolkait was annexed by the TPLF when it came to power in 1990. Soon after the TPLF started the war in November 2020, Wolkait was taken back by the ENDF and the Amharan militias, who now control the region.

The victims of OLA's massacres in western Oromia were from this regional State of Amhara, on the frontline of TPLF's invasion from the Tigray State in the northern end of the country.

### **An unlikely alliance with Al-Shabaab**

While not dismissing the possibility of opportunistic short-term cooperation between the OLA and Al-Shabaab, Hassan is skeptical of the likelihood of the latter entering the TPLF-OLA coalition. Organized along ethnic lines, the latter have both Christians, the majority in Ethiopia, and Muslims, the largest minority, in their ranks. Al-Shabaab has other objectives.

"It seems their agenda is to exploit the security crisis in the country to get a foothold in the Muslim-majority areas in east Oromia," and spread Islamist extremism from there across Ethiopia cutting across the ethnic divides, Hassan told *Peoples Dispatch*. While the OLA also operates here, most of their operations are in western Oromia, where the majority population is Christian.



	The introduction of religious extremism into this toxic mix of ethnic tensions already tearing at Ethiopia, allegedly with foreign backing, could further complicate the challenges faced by Abiy Ahmed's government.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Killing of al-Zawahiri, impact on AQ?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/02/zawahiri-al-qaeda-leader-killed/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/02/zawahiri-al-qaeda-leader-killed/</a>
GIST	<p>Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda and one of the world's most wanted terrorists, <a href="#">has been killed</a> in a U.S. drone strike in Kabul.</p> <p>The 71-year-old was largely considered <a href="#">the brains behind the notorious terrorist group</a> and its vision for attacking the West — including the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, which catapulted al-Qaeda from relative obscurity to a household name in the United States.</p> <p>President Biden said in an address to the nation Monday that Zawahiri's death — after he evaded capture for decades — sent a clear message: “No matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out.”</p> <p>The strike is the latest in a string of successful <a href="#">U.S. operations against al-Qaeda and Islamic State leaders</a>. Biden said Zawahiri's death should help ensure Afghanistan can no longer “become a terrorist safe haven” and a “launching pad” for attacks against the United States.</p> <p>Security experts say the operation demonstrates that the United States is still able to carry out precision strikes in Afghanistan after last year's withdrawal of troops on the ground. On the other hand, it also <a href="#">highlights the Taliban's apparent willingness</a> to accommodate al-Qaeda operatives in the region.</p> <p>Here's a look at what Zawahiri's death means for al-Qaeda.</p> <p><b>When was al-Qaeda founded?</b></p> <p>Al-Qaeda grew out of battlefield bonds forged in the Afghan insurgency against the Soviet Union, which was <a href="#">redirected toward fighting the West</a>.</p> <p>The group, founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden, <a href="#">attracted disaffected recruits</a> who opposed American support for Israel and Middle Eastern dictatorships.</p> <p>When the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in 1996, it gave al-Qaeda the sanctuary that enabled it to run training camps and plot attacks, including 9/11.</p> <p><b>What was Ayman al-Zawahiri's role in al-Qaeda?</b></p> <p>Americans knew him as al-Qaeda's No. 2 leader, the bespectacled, bushy-bearded deputy to bin Laden. In reality, longtime <a href="#">observers say</a>, he provided the ideological direction, while bin Laden was the public face of the terrorist group.</p> <p>Zawahiri merged his own Egyptian militant group with al-Qaeda in the 1990s. For decades, he served as “the mastermind behind attacks against Americans,” Biden said Monday — including the <a href="#">2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen</a>, which killed 17 American sailors and wounded dozens more, and the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed hundreds and injured scores.</p> <p>“To kill Americans and their allies — civilian and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in every country in which it is possible to do it,” Zawahiri wrote in a 1998 manifesto.</p> <p>After the group's forced retreat from its base in Afghanistan in early 2002, it was largely Zawahiri who led al-Qaeda's resurgence in the lawless tribal region across the border in Pakistan, <a href="#">The Washington Post wrote</a> in an obituary Monday.</p> <p><b>What happened to al-Qaeda after bin Laden was killed?</b></p>

When bin Laden was killed in 2011, his No. 2, Zawahiri, took over as leader.

Although he was the intellectual force behind the terrorist movement, [some experts say](#) Zawahiri lacked bin Laden's charisma. He remained as a figurehead but failed to prevent the splintering of the Islamist movement in Syria and other conflict zones after 2011.

His grip over a sprawling network of affiliates across Africa, Asia and the Middle East was weakened. The Islamic State terrorist group, which grew out of al-Qaeda's Iraqi affiliate, sought to position itself as a more ruthless alternative.

In his later years, Zawahiri largely shied from public view, presiding over al-Qaeda at a time of decline, with [most of the group's founding figures dead](#) or in hiding.

At the time of the U.S. withdrawal last August, analysts described al-Qaeda in Afghanistan as ["a skeleton of its former self."](#) after two decades of conflict and counterterrorism operations. A United Nations report in July estimated there were [up to 400](#) al-Qaeda fighters remaining in Afghanistan.

Some security experts [feared an al-Qaeda reboot](#) under the Taliban. At the time of his death, U.S. intelligence indicated that Zawahiri, rather than hiding, was living with his family in downtown Kabul in a high-security residential district where many senior Taliban figures reside.

#### **What will happen to al-Qaeda now?**

Analysts say that in the past, al-Qaeda has adjusted to the loss of leaders, with new figures emerging in their place. Today, though, the group is splintered, with branches and affiliates spanning the globe from West Africa to India. The [question remains](#) whether those groups will focus on local conflicts or coalesce for more global ambitions.

Charles Lister, a terrorism expert at the Middle East Institute, said al-Qaeda "now faces an acute succession crisis." Senior leader Saif al-Adel is technically the next in line to take the helm, but he is based in Iran, which has caused affiliates to question his credibility in the past, [he wrote](#) Monday. His potential ascension could be the "death knell" for al-Qaeda's aspirations as a global organization as affiliates deepen their independence from the group, Lister said.

Al-Qaeda hasn't carried out any major terrorist attacks in the United States or Europe in recent years, following [bombings that killed 52 people in London in 2005](#). Some attackers were inspired by al-Qaeda, such as a Saudi military trainee [who killed three American sailors](#) at a U.S. base in Florida in December 2019. A knife-wielding assailant who fatally stabbed a man and a woman in an attack near London Bridge that same year had previously been a member of [an al-Qaeda-inspired](#) cell.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Taliban tourism complex at heritage site</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/fears-over-building-works-at-afghan-buddhas-of-bamiyan-site">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/fears-over-building-works-at-afghan-buddhas-of-bamiyan-site</a>
GIST	<p>The <a href="#">Taliban</a> have launched construction work on a tourism complex just metres from the cliff that held the Bamiyan Buddha statues, which archeologists and experts warn could cause permanent damage to the sensitive world heritage site.</p> <p>The project aims to "rebuild" a historic bazaar, which was destroyed in the civil war of the 1990s. Under the Taliban blueprint, the area will become a tourism centre with restaurants, guesthouses, parking, public toilets and handicraft and grocery shops.</p> <p>But the ruined bazaar is itself a historic site that may sit on top of older ruins, and it is also close to the fragile cliff of Buddhist monastery caves that is one of Afghanistan's greatest treasures.</p>

“This old bazaar is in the archaeological buffer zone of the world heritage site and Unesco [the UN agency that manages the listings] has never been in favour of reusing this place,” said a diplomat with expertise in heritage issues in Afghanistan, who asked to remain anonymous.

“On the contrary, these buildings are located in the middle of an archaeological zone, and the buildings themselves are in some way part of the late 19th- and early 20th-century heritage and therefore their reconstruction is sensitive.”

In 2001, the Taliban destroyed two giant statues that had towered over the valley for more than a millennium, but the niches where they stood, and surviving cave frescos and other remains still make the site one of global importance.

The main road through Bamiyan was re-routed years ago to limit vibrations and fumes from traffic. This new plan would bring a heavy influx of people and vehicles back into a fragile area, officially designated a protected zone.

“The caravanserai should be used as guesthouses, for people [tourists] to stay overnight, and as exhibition places for local handicrafts, for provision of public toilets and parking,” said Mawlawi Saifurrahman Mohammadi, the provincial director for information and culture.

“The shops will be handicraft shops that can only sell local products, grocery shops, tailoring and embroidery shops, traditional restaurants and tea shops.”

He was speaking at an inauguration event where top Taliban officials including Bamiyan governor Abdullah Sarhadi gave speeches, cut a ribbon and placed symbolic red-wrapped foundation stones for new buildings in a recently dug trench.

Mohammadi said over 20 strict building controls had been fixed to respect the sensitive nature of the site. They include limiting buildings to a single storey, restricting the use of concrete for drains and pavements, and controlling the type of stones and plaster used.

He said the project had been signed off by Unesco, the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural agency. “[The central government] negotiated with Unesco and they sent us back a guideline on how to do it.”

But Unesco, which monitors world heritage sites and has been working at Bamiyan for decades, said it had not been consulted on the project, and had not given its approval to rebuilding the bazaar. It warned in a statement that the building could affect conservation work.

“Unesco has neither requested nor been associated with this project, which is located in the heart of the archaeological zone and could be problematic for the proper conservation of the world heritage site,” it said in a statement.

Heritage experts from Bamiyan also said they were alarmed at the destructive potential of the plan.

“This is a very restricted area, nobody is allowed to do any construction here, but the Taliban have decided to rebuild,” said one official who asked not to be named criticising the government. “I worked here in the past and I know the value of the site.

Sarhadi said he decided to launch the reconstruction after the owners of the shops came to petition him. They said they had effectively been robbed of their land when it was marked a heritage area and rebuilding banned.

“We should not let people have their land taken away here,” he said. “People could not get their [rightful] property, now it’s time they get it back.”

	In tacit recognition of the area's potential archeological value however, Mohammadi said the government would reserve the right to reclaim the bazaar area for archeological excavation in future.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Al-Zawahiri's life of secrecy, violence</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/asia/ayman-al-zawahri-dead.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/asia/ayman-al-zawahri-dead.html</a>
GIST	<p>Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian-born surgeon-turned-jihadist who assumed the leadership of Al Qaeda after the killing of Osama bin Laden and who died at 71 in a drone strike in Kabul, Afghanistan, over the weekend, according to U.S. officials, led a life steeped in secrecy, betrayal, conspiracy and violence, most murderously in the Sept. 11 attacks against the United States in 2001.</p> <p>While Bin Laden, who was killed by an American raid in 2011, was widely seen as the terrorist mastermind of those attacks, many counterterrorism experts considered al-Zawahri more responsible.</p> <p>With his white turban and dense, gray beard, his forehead marked by the bruising prized by some Muslims as denoting piety from frequent prayer, al-Zawahri had little of Bin Laden's charisma and none of his access to fabled family wealth. But he was widely depicted as the intellectual spine of Al Qaeda — its chief operating officer, its public relations executive, and a profound influence who helped the Saudi-born Bin Laden grow from a charismatic preacher into a deadly terrorist with global reach.</p> <p>In an interview in May 2011 with the Investigative Project on Terrorism, a research group, Tawfik Hamid, a former Islamist militant who now studies the subject, said that of the two men, al-Zawahri was a more influential leader. "When you listen to him, you can tell clearly that he has the ambition and is dedicated 100 percent to achieve this mission," Mr. Hamid said.</p> <p>During his leadership of Al Qaeda, the organization's global influence waned as the Islamic State rose. But the group remained a threat, with affiliates in several countries carrying out attacks. And al-Zawahri, to whom they all swore allegiance, was still one of the world's most-wanted terrorists at his death.</p> <p>From his teenage years in an upscale suburb of Cairo, al-Zawahri led a cat-and-mouse existence, serving prison terms in Egypt and Russia and hunted by adversaries, including U.S. counterterrorism authorities, who placed a \$25 million bounty on his head.</p> <p>Yet he seemed always to stay one step ahead, hiding out in the craggy redoubts of Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal areas.</p> <p>Over time, his aims and ideology evolved from a visceral hatred of secular rule in Egypt, where he was among those tried for conspiracy in the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, to a virulent campaign to strike at the so-called "far enemy," the United States, Al Qaeda's target of preference.</p> <p>The group's tactical strength lay in its ability to launch spectacular assaults, starting with the simultaneous attacks on the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and the suicide bombing of the American destroyer Cole in Yemen in 2000, and culminating in the attacks on New York and Washington in 2001 that led to the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.</p> <p>In the following decade, American counterterrorism authorities pursued Bin Laden and al-Zawahri, his deputy and chosen successor. Drone strikes decimated Al Qaeda's leadership in a sustained effort to degrade the organization and avenge the Sept. 11 attacks. On at least one occasion, al-Zawahri was said to have died, only to resurface in the sporadic video and audiotapes that spread his message.</p> <p>In May 2011, a Navy SEAL team killed Bin Laden in a raid on his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. For a more than a month, Al Qaeda was silent on its future leadership.</p> <p>Then al-Zawahri put out a 28-minute video of himself. With a rifle in the background and making a chopping motion with his hand, he promised that Bin Laden would continue to "terrify" America after his death.</p>

“Blood for blood,” he said.

### **A Rising Competitor**

By that time, a newer generation of jihadists had grown, first in the chaos of Iraq after the American invasion, and then spreading to Syria after civil war broke out there in 2011.

In the ensuing mayhem, the Islamic State rose to prominence as a new beacon of jihadist zeal, attracting tens of thousands of followers with its media-savvy, internet-age messages, its slick videos of beheadings and its capture of huge swaths of territory in which it declared a new caliphate for the world’s Muslims.

Shorn of its iconic leader, Al Qaeda, by contrast, had been forced to abandon its centralized command structure while its affiliates, particularly in Yemen and Syria, pledged allegiance to al-Zawahri in a sharpening and bloody feud with the Islamic State, which, paradoxically, had begun as an offshoot of Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Both groups were rooted in Sunni Muslim extremism. But the distinctions between them were legion. While the Islamic State sought hegemony among jihadist groups and thirsted for territorial expansion, Al Qaeda’s affiliates showed increasing readiness to cooperate with other groups and little appetite for occupation.

al-Zawahri castigated the Islamic State and its leaders for their practice of killing Shiite Muslim civilians, fearing that such killings would taint the jihadist cause among Muslims. And while Islamic State disciples reinforced the group’s reputation for brutality through videos of the decapitations of Western hostages and other acts of savagery, al-Zawahri opposed such displays, apparently to avoid alienating potential supporters.

Sajjan M. Gohel, a specialist in international terrorism based in London, wrote that al-Zawahri was happy to let the Islamic State face attacks by U.S.-backed coalition forces in Iraq and Syria, giving Al Qaeda the space to “reconstitute its infrastructure and networks across the Islamic world” and revive its long-term goal of striking targets in the West.

In 2015, al-Zawahri played what he calculated would be a winning card in his group’s revival, introducing to followers Hamza bin Laden, a son of the Al Qaeda founder, and describing him in an audio recording as a “lion from Al Qaeda’s den.” In the broadcast, Hamza bin Laden exhorted jihadists to carry out “the highest number of attacks” on Western cities. A year later, in a message aimed at America titled “We are all Osama,” Hamza bin Laden issued a personal appeal to avenge his father.

“Yours will be a harsh reckoning,” he said. “We are a nation that does not rest over injustice.”

Hamza bin Laden had been among a group of Bin Laden relatives who took refuge in Iran after the Sept. 11 attacks, held under house arrest arrangements of varying severity. Some analysts believed that he was no more than a figurehead whose utterances were intended to lure younger jihadists from the Islamic State.

According to Mr. Gohel, Hamza bin Laden had at least two wives, including a daughter of al-Zawahri’s who bore two children, linking the two families in a “strategic marriage alliance.”

Hamza bin Laden was killed in a counterterrorism operation in Afghanistan sometime in 2017 or 2018, [American officials said](#).

al-Zawahri’s deputies were also picked off. Abu al-Khayr al-Masri was killed by a U.S. drone strike in Syria in 2017. A successor, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, who went by the nom de guerre Abu Muhammad al-Masri, [was killed by Israeli operatives in Tehran](#) in 2020.

In 2021, nearly 20 years after the United States invaded Afghanistan to drive Al Qaeda out, the Taliban retook control of the country and gave its ally, Al Qaeda, safe haven. al-Zawahri duly returned.

## **A Prominent Family**

Ayman Muhammad Rabie al-Zawahri, one of five children, was born on June 19, 1951, in Maadi, a Cairo suburb. His father was a pharmacology professor whose uncle had been grand imam of Al Azhar, a 1,000-year-old university that is a center of Islamic learning.

His mother's father was president of Cairo University, founder and director of King Saud University in Riyadh and an ambassador to Saudi Arabia and other countries. Another of her relatives was the first secretary general of the Arab League.

Despite its prominence, the family displayed little evident prosperity and never owned a car until Ayman was grown. Lawrence Wright, in his book "The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11" (2006), said that the al-Zawahris' reclusive, conservative, even backward ways caused them to be perceived as "hicks."

Al-Zawahri was a brilliant student when he was not daydreaming and opposed contact sports as inhumane. He began reading Islamist literature at an early age. One enormous influence was Sayyid Qutb, an Islamic thinker who saw the world diametrically divided between believers and infidels. (He included moderate Muslims among the infidels.) Qutb was imprisoned and tortured in Egypt and hanged there in 1966.

"In al-Zawahri's eyes, Sayyid Qutb's words struck young Muslims more deeply than those of his contemporaries because his words eventually led to his execution," Montasser al-Zayyat, an Islamic radical and lawyer, wrote in "The Road to Al Qaeda: The Story of Bin Laden's Right-Hand Man" (2004).

Another influence was the humiliating defeat the Arab countries suffered at the hands of Israel in 1967. It turned many young people away from the Pan-Arab socialism pursued by President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and toward anti-Western forms of Islam.

In 1966, al-Zawahri helped form an underground militant cell dedicated to replacing Egypt's secular government with an Islamic one. He was 15.

At first there were five members. By 1974 there were 40. Al-Zawahri kept his involvement secret from even his family while he attended medical school at Cairo University. He graduated in 1974, served three years in the army and earned a master's degree in surgery in 1978.

Through his and her families, al-Zawahri met Azza Nowair, who, Mr. Wright wrote, came from a well-off background. He suggested that in another time she might have been a professional or a socialite. But she had become deeply religious, wore a veil and spent whole nights reading the Quran.

When they were married in 1979, al-Zawahri had seen her face exactly once. At the ceremony, there were men's and women's sections. At the bride's request, there was no music or photography.

In October 2001, soon after the attacks on America, Azza al-Zawahri and at least one of their children were killed by bombardments in Afghanistan. Wounded, she had refused to be pulled from the rubble, news accounts of the bombardment said, for fear that rescuers would see her face — an offense against Islamic modesty. Published reports have said that they had four daughters and a son.

Al-Zawahri was working in a clinic in Egypt in 1980 when he seized an opportunity to go to Peshawar, Pakistan, for the Red Crescent, the Muslim correlate of the Red Cross, to treat refugees fleeing Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion. He visited Afghanistan and recognized it as a good place to launch a jihad, returning many times.

When he was arrested in 1981 for conspiring to murder Mr. Sadat, he was slapped by the chief of police. al-Zawahri slapped him back.



At his trial, along with hundreds of others, he was convicted only of gun possession. But as the trial proceeded for nearly three years, he was repeatedly tortured in prison. Under interrogation, he revealed the name, activities and whereabouts of one of his collaborators, a soldier, which led to the man's arrest.

In an interview with The New Yorker in 2002, Mr. Zayyat, the lawyer for many Islamist activists, suggested that the guilt al-Zawahri felt over this betrayal was a major reason for his leaving Egypt after he was released in 1984.

His journey took him to Saudi Arabia and then, in 1986, back to Peshawar, where Bin Laden sometimes lectured at the hospital where al-Zawahri worked. Al-Zawahri became Bin Laden's personal physician, set up a security force around him and helped the Saudi begin thinking about specific ways to hurt the Western powers and the Middle Eastern governments they supported.

"When Ayman met Bin Laden, he created a revolution inside of him," Mr. Zayyat told The New Yorker. The deal was straightforward: al-Zawahri would supply the political acumen and an educated leadership cadre to turn Bin Laden's loose coalition, and his own unformed impulses, into an instrument of mass murder. Bin Laden provided money and prestige.

Mr. Zayyat, who once shared an Egyptian prison cell with al-Zawahri, wrote that he was convinced that al-Zawahri was more responsible than Bin Laden for the attacks on the United States, a view shared by other counterterrorism experts.

### **Deviating From Islam**

In 1998, al-Zawahri wrote a document intended to unite militant groups in the common cause of killing Americans anywhere, not just in the Middle East. In 2001, his organization, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, officially merged with Bin Laden's Qaeda network to create Qaeda al Jihad.

Al-Zawahri had the delicate task of explaining Al Qaeda's deviation from Islamic teachings that prohibit killing innocent people, particularly Muslims, and that bar suicide. He maintained that a martyr's true faith reversed these prohibitions.

"According to him the majority of Muslims around the world are not Muslim," Azzam Tamimi, director of the Institute of Islamic Political Thought in London, told Time magazine. "His ideas negate the existence of common ground with others, irrespective of religion."

Al-Zawahri became familiar to the world as the man sitting at Bin Laden's side in videos, and, later, by himself.

His turn of phrase shone in his greeting to President Barack Obama in 2008: "Be aware that the dogs of Afghanistan have found the flesh of your soldiers to be delicious, so send thousands after thousands to them."

But he could also counsel moderation, if public relations required it. In 2005, he wrote Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, that he should stop attacking mosques and making videos of beheadings. In 2003, he scrubbed a plan to flood New York subway tunnels with cyanide because, he said, it "was not sufficiently inspiring."

By 1990, Islamist guerrillas, backed by Pakistan and the C.I.A., had forced the Soviets out of Afghanistan, and the Arabs who had come to fight the Soviets were leaving. Sudan's government invited Bin Laden there. He and al-Zawahri bought farms in Sudan and converted them into military training bases. They also established camps in Yemen.

Al-Zawahri organized several terrorist acts, including an assassination attempt on the Egyptian prime minister. The bomb missed its target, but 21 people were wounded and a 12-year-old schoolgirl was killed.

In November 1995, al-Zawahri dispatched suicide bombers to [blow up the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad](#), Pakistan. After they succeeded, Egyptian intelligence blackmailed two teenage boys and used them to plant listening devices in homes of Islamic Jihad members. One boy was supposed to leave a suitcase full of explosives near al-Zawahri.

But the Sudanese authorities arrested both boys. Al-Zawahri persuaded the authorities to release them so that he could interrogate them. He then tried them for treason, convicted them and killed them, before circulating a tape of their confessions.

Many Islamists turned against al-Zawahri, and Sudan expelled him and his organization. The Arab radicals returned to Afghanistan.

In 1996, al-Zawahri smuggled himself into the Russian republic of Chechnya, but was apprehended at the border and detained, according to a memo obtained by The Wall Street Journal. The Russians failed to identify him and released him.

In 1995 and 1996, a series of bombings in Saudi Arabia killed Americans. In 1998, al-Zawahri commissioned a study on Jewish influence in the United States; it led to the United States' being formally placed on Islamic Jihad's list of acceptable targets. Bin Laden was so pleased that he raised Islamic Jihad's annual budget from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

As a result of the founding document written by al-Zawahri, the International Islamic Front for Jihad on the Jews and Crusaders was formed in February 1998, combining the organizations of Bin Laden and al-Zawahri. Its goal: kill Americans everywhere.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Al Qaeda presence in Afghanistan?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/zawahri-death-raises-questions-over-al-qaeda-operations-in-taliban-controlled-afghanistan">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/zawahri-death-raises-questions-over-al-qaeda-operations-in-taliban-controlled-afghanistan</a>
GIST	<p>Al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahri's death in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is raising questions about whether the country is being used as a base of operations for the terrorist group.</p> <p>"What unnerves me is that Al Zawahri felt comfortable enough being out in the open in the Kabul area after the Taliban takeover," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. "So much for the Taliban rejecting al-Qaeda. This is proof positive that Afghanistan has once again become a safe haven for international terrorists."</p> <p>National security experts say Zawahri's presence within the country signals a troubling relationship between al Qaeda and the Taliban. The two organizations have long co-existed alongside one another, sharing similar tactics and ideologies.</p> <p>"There's no doubt that they've been brothers — the Taliban and al Qaeda," said retired four-star General Jack Keane, a former vice chief of staff of the United States Army. "It's not surprising that Zawahri returned to his family in Kabul, in fact, the house that he was in belonged to an aide to a senior Taliban official."</p> <p>Zawahri was killed by a U.S.-led drone strike over the weekend. The 71-year-old al Qaeda leader had ruled the terrorist organization since the death of Osama bin Laden in July 2011.</p> <p>A one-time surgeon, Zawahri was known by U.S. intelligence as a terrorist mastermind for helping plot the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.</p> <p>"We make it clear again tonight that no matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out," said President Biden.</p>

The drone strike was the first one publicly acknowledged by the White House since U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan last year. The withdrawal saw the U.S. abandon [billions in military equipment](#), air bases, and prisons crammed with [enemy combatants](#) to the Taliban.

Given Zawahri's presence in Afghanistan, national security experts say there are concerns the Taliban is allowing [al Qaeda](#) to use the country as its base of operation for conducting terrorism.

"Afghanistan is a petri dish growing threats to the region and beyond," said Dan Hoffman, a former director of the CIA's Middle East and North Africa division. "The one lesson we learned from September 11 is that you can't give these guys ungoverned space."

The White House said Monday that Zawahri had urged his followers in recent weeks to mobilize and attack the United States and its allies. Biden told the public during a prime-time address that Zawahri's death is part of a commitment by the U.S. to "never again allow Afghanistan to become a terrorist" safe haven.

Some national security experts question, however, whether the administration has the resources at its disposal to live up to that pledge.

"Even the American government has only so many resources to devote to counterterrorism, particularly with the situation in Russia, China, and Ukraine," said James Jefferey, who served as former President Donald Trump's special envoy for combating ISIS. "It doesn't mean we won't go after al Qaeda in the future, but there are a lot of trouble spots already out there."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Terrorist label? Jan 6 sentencing in debate</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/labeled-terrorist-jan-sentencing-fuels-debate/story?id=87769985">https://abcnews.go.com/US/labeled-terrorist-jan-sentencing-fuels-debate/story?id=87769985</a>
GIST	<p>A 49-year-old Texas man was sentenced by a judge to more than <a href="#">seven years in prison</a> Monday for his role in the Capitol attack, the harshest sentence yet for a Jan. 6 defendant -- but legal and national security experts say another decision made by the judge could carry potentially broader implications.</p> <p>In handing down an 87-month sentence to Guy Wesley Reffitt, U.S. District Judge Dabney Friedrich declined to characterize the defendant as a domestic terrorist, as prosecutors had requested.</p> <p>Prosecutors had sought a 15-year prison term for Reffitt, predicated on the use of an increasingly rare legal tool called the "terrorism enhancement," which empowers judges to issue sentences above the federal guidelines for certain crimes. Federal sentencing guidelines in Reffitt's case called for a prison sentence between nine and 11 years.</p> <p>On Monday, Friedrich brushed aside the government's motion for a terrorism enhancement, citing other Jan.6-related defendants whose conduct appeared to be more serious than Reffitt's -- and for whom the Justice Department chose not to pursue the terrorism enhancement.</p> <p>Experts said Friedrich's decision demonstrates the challenge prosecutors face in meeting the exceptionally high standard to formally label someone a terrorist under the law.</p> <p>"In the court of common sense, individuals who went into the Capitol to engage in destructive behavior and disrupt a lawful government proceeding may have, by definition, committed an act terrorism," said John Cohen, a former Homeland Security official who is now an ABC News contributor. "But the challenge for prosecutors is to prove that a defendant has met the specific legal elements of a terrorism offense."</p> <p>The terrorism enhancement, codified in section 3A 1.4 of the federal sentencing guidelines, traces its roots back to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, after which Congress enacted tougher penalties to deter acts of "intimidation or coercion" aimed at the government or civilian population.</p>

In the intervening years, terrorism sentences have most frequently been applied to defendants with ties to ISIS or al-Qaida, or to violent domestic extremists like Cesar Sayoc, who [pleaded guilty in 2018](#) to mailing pipe bombs to members of Congress.

But critics complain that the law is too broad and too inconsistently applied.

In 2017, for example, prosecutors secured a terrorism enhancement for [Jessica Reznicek](#), a climate activist who pleaded guilty to damaging pipeline infrastructure across the Midwest. A federal appeals court upheld her sentence in June.

Meanwhile, neither Dylann Roof, who pleaded guilty to massacring nine people at a [Charleston bible study](#), nor James Fields, who was convicted of killing a [Charlottesville demonstrator](#) with his car, were sentenced with the terrorism enhancement.

Reffitt, for his part, brought a weapon to the Capitol on Jan. 6 and threatened to "physically attack, remove, and replace" lawmakers, making him a "quintessential" case for the enhancement, prosecutors wrote in a July sentencing memorandum. In March, a jury found him guilty on five felony counts, including obstruction of justice, as well as entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds with a firearm.

The case marked the first time the Justice Department sought to have a terrorism enhancement applied to a Jan. 6 defendant.

"We do believe that what he was doing that day was domestic terrorism and we do believe that he's a domestic terrorist," Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Nestler told Judge Friedrich Monday, before the judge declined to apply the terrorism enhancement.

In rejecting the enhancement, Friedrich sided with Reffitt's defense counsel, who accused prosecutors of utilizing the tool as retribution for Reffitt taking the case to trial.

"This is the only case where the government has asked for the terrorism enhancement, and this is the only case where the defendant has gone to trial," said Clinton Broden, a lawyer for Reffitt. "I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure that out."

Friedrich's decision to reject the enhancement in Reffitt's case serves as further evidence of its "undisciplined, arbitrary use" in federal cases, according to Bill Quigley, a lawyer for Reznicek.

"How can Jessica Reznicek be a terrorist in the eyes of the law, and this person who stormed the Capitol and threatened members of Congress not be?" Quigley said.

"It is ironic that prosecutors managed to secure this enhancement for a person who damaged infrastructure belonging to a private company, but the courts failed to apply the same label to someone who used violence to further their extremist ideological beliefs in the seat of our democracy," Cohen said.

Jordan Strauss, a former national security official in the Justice Department, pointed out that the government's pursuit of a terrorist enhancement against Reffitt could mark a shift in its handling of Jan. 6-related cases -- and could foreshadow a more aggressive approach in future cases.

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"This case is noteworthy in that it may reflect a policy change for January 6th cases moving forward," said Strauss, who now serves as the managing director at the Kroll Institute, a corporate consulting firm. "We should expect to see more enhancements sought, particularly if there are guilty verdicts in the more complex sedition cases."

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SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-announces-killing-al-qaeda-leader-kabul-justice/story?id=87768565">https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-announces-killing-al-qaeda-leader-kabul-justice/story?id=87768565</a>
GIST	<p>President Joe Biden announced Monday that the U.S. <a href="#">had killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri</a> in a drone strike in Kabul, Afghanistan, over the weekend.</p> <p>He hailed the operation as a significant win in the fight against terror groups overseas -- including, as the White House was quick to point out almost a year after the messy exit from Afghanistan, in countries where the U.S. no longer maintains a military presence.</p> <p>"Justice has been delivered, and this terrorist leader is no more. People around the world no longer need to fear the vicious and determined killer," Biden said, speaking from the White House where <a href="#">he is isolating with COVID-19</a>.</p> <p>"The United States continues to demonstrate our resolve and our capacity to defend the American people against those who seek to do us harm," he said. "We make it clear again tonight that no matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out."</p> <p>Briefing reporters on Monday ahead of Biden's remarks, a senior administration official said that "we showed that without American forces on the ground in Afghanistan and in harm's way, we remain able to identify and locate even the world's most wanted terrorists and then take action to remove him from the battlefield." It was a subtle rebuke of the sharp criticism the administration faced last year in leaving Afghanistan in the face of a resurgent Taliban.</p> <p>The president said in his speech that al-Zawahiri had returned to the Afghan capital to be with family and was killed on Sunday morning local time. Al-Zawahiri <a href="#">was named the leader of al-Qaeda</a> after Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. forces in 2011 and officials believe he was a key part of the group's international activities for decades.</p> <p>"He was deeply involved in the planning of 9/11, one of the most responsible for the attacks that killed 2,977 people on American soil. For decades, he was the mastermind behind attacks against Americans," Biden said. "He carved a trail of murder and violence against American citizens, American service members, American diplomats and American interests."</p> <p>Biden said he hoped al-Zawahiri's killing could offer a moment of relief for those who had family members killed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.</p> <p>"We continue to mourn every innocent life that was stolen on 9/11 and honor their memories," he said. "To the families who lost fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and coworkers on that searing September day, it is my hope that this decisive action will bring one more measure of closure."</p> <p>The U.S. drone strike comes after collaboration from various parts of the counterterrorism community, the senior administration official told reporters earlier Monday. A separate source told ABC News the operation was carried out by the CIA.</p> <p>Biden was first briefed on al-Zawahiri's whereabouts in April and was ultimately briefed on a proposed operation on July 1, the administration official told reporters. Key Cabinet members and advisers were convened on July 25 to receive a final updated briefing on the intelligence assessment, which the official said continued to strengthen on a daily basis.</p> <p>"The president received an updated operational report and pressed at a granular level. He asked again about any other options that would reduce collateral or civilian casualties. He wanted to understand more about the layout of rooms [of al-Zawahiri's safe house in Kabul] behind the door and windows on the third floor of the building," the official said.</p>

"At the conclusion of the meeting, the president authorized a precise tailored airstrike on the condition that a strike minimize to the greatest extent possible the risk of civilian casualties. This authorization meant that the U.S. government could conduct an airstrike once an opportunity was available," the official said.

The U.S. is confident through intelligence sources and "multiple streams of intelligence that he was killed "and no other individual," the official said.

The successful remote strike against al-Zawahiri comes nearly a year after Biden presided over the turbulent U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan following two decades of war. He and his administration insisted then that the cost of involvement wasn't worth the chaos and that the U.S. would still have the capability to track and eliminate terror threats without forces on the ground.

"We showed that without American forces on the ground in Afghanistan and in harm's way we remain able to identify and locate even the world's most wanted terrorists and then take action to remove him from the battlefield," the senior administration official said Monday.

The exit from Afghanistan, which had been negotiated during the Trump administration, took place against the backdrop of an unexpectedly rapid takeover of the country by the Taliban, the armed group the U.S. had fought after invading in 2001. Biden was castigated by Republicans and others over his handling of the withdrawal.

Evacuation efforts were also marred by an Islamic State attack at an airport checkpoint in Kabul as the U.S. military and others worked to ferry out civilians. Thirteen U.S. troops and dozens of Afghans were killed.

On Monday, the senior administration official told reporters that al-Zawahiri had been staying in one of Kabul's most affluent and prominent neighborhoods, near various diplomatic centers and international companies. The official confirmed that the ruling Taliban were aware of his presence in the area, knowledge that could further strain already tenuous relations with Washington.

The official said that the Taliban sought to cover up al-Zawahiri's presence at his safe house after the strike.

"This is a very important point for us to make clear to the Taliban: that we expect them to abide by the terms of the Doha agreement, and the presence of al-Zawahiri in downtown Kabul is a clear violation of that," the senior official said, referring to the agreement the Taliban negotiated with President Donald Trump in Doha, Qatar.

"My administration will continue to vigilantly monitor and address threats from al-Qaeda, no matter where they emanate from," Biden said in his speech from the White House. "The United States did not seek this war against terror, it came to us, and we answered with the same principles and resolve that have shaped us for generation upon generation: to protect [the] innocent, defend liberty, and we keep the light of freedom burning -- a beacon for the rest of the entire world."

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HEADLINE	08/01 US drone strike kills AQ leader al-Zawahiri
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/us-conducts-successful-operation-significant-al-qaeda-target/story?id=87721122">https://abcnews.go.com/International/us-conducts-successful-operation-significant-al-qaeda-target/story?id=87721122</a>
GIST	<p>The leader of al-Qaeda, one of the FBI's most wanted terrorists, was killed in a drone strike in Kabul over the weekend, President Joe Biden announced Monday night.</p> <p>ABC News also confirmed through sources familiar with the operation that al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed in the U.S. strike in Afghanistan. A senior administration official said earlier Monday that the U.S. conducted a successful counterterrorism operation against a "significant" al-Qaeda target, adding that there were no civilian casualties.</p>



The counterterrorism attack took place in Wazir Akbar Khan, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Kabul and literally walking distance to the main diplomatic areas, including the U.S. Embassy. Al-Zawahiri was killed on the balcony of his safe house, a senior administration official said.

Biden delivered remarks on the operation Monday night, saying he authorized the U.S. strike that killed al-Zawahiri. The president also delivered a clear message to terrorism around the world.

"Justice has been delivered and this terrorist leader is no more," Biden said from the White House. "People around the world no longer need to fear the vicious and determined killer."

Biden said the United States is sending a clear message with this strike: "No matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out."

The president said the intelligence community located al-Zawahiri earlier this year and that he moved to downtown Kabul. Biden said he gave the final approval "to go get him" after being advised that "the conditions were optimal."

"I authorized the precision strike that would remove him from the battlefield once and for all," he said, explaining that the operation was carefully planned to minimize the risk of harm to other civilians. Biden authorized the strike on July 25.

The president the mission was a "total success" because of the counterterrorism community, and key U.S. allies and partners.

Al-Zawahiri, who was born in Cairo in 1951, trained as a physician before founding the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the FBI said. His organization had sought to overthrow the Egyptian government "through violent means" before [merging](#) with al-Qaeda between 1998 and 1999, the U.N. Security Council said.

As Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda deputy, al-Zawahiri helped coordinate the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people in the United States, the U.S. Justice Department said.

Al-Zawahiri and bin Laden [appeared together](#) the day after the attacks in a video, in which an al-Qaeda spokesperson threatened the West, saying a "great army is gathering against you," U.S. officials said.

The Justice Department named al-Zawahiri and bin Laden as [unindicted co-conspirators](#) for their roles in coordinating the attacks.

Both [had been indicted](#) in the Southern District of New York in 1999 for the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which killed 224 people the previous year.

After bin Laden's death in 2011, al-Zawahiri took over as al-Qaeda's leader, officials said.

The FBI had placed al-Zawahiri, who was sometimes known as "The Doctor" or "The Teacher," on its list of [Most Wanted Terrorists](#), offering a \$25 million reward for his capture.

The strike that killed al-Zawahiri is a major success of U.S. counterterrorism efforts and the result of countless hours of intelligence collection over many years.

"This mission shows the tenacity and absolute dedication of U.S. intelligence and military professionals toward pursuing those responsible for the attacks of 9/11," said Mick Mulroy, retired CIA paramilitary operations officer and ABC News national security analyst.

"The message for al-Qaeda and its affiliates should be that the U.S. will never relent in its mission to hold those accountable who would seek to harm America and its people," Mulroy added.

	It also "sends a resounding message to terrorist leaders and aspiring terrorists that America's resolve doesn't fade," said Eric Oehlerich, retired Navy SEAL commander and ABC News contributor, who also reiterated "that those who commit to harming the U.S. or American citizens will be held to account."
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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Cities risk Mideast temperatures by 2100?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/01/us-cities-risk-middle-eastern-temperatures-by-2100-climate-crisis">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/01/us-cities-risk-middle-eastern-temperatures-by-2100-climate-crisis</a>
GIST	<p>The climate crisis risks pushing many Americans into entirely new climatic realities, with a new analysis finding there are 16 US cities at risk of having summer temperatures on a par with locations in the Middle East by the end of the century.</p> <p>Heatwaves have roiled huge swaths of the US this summer, placing nearly a third of the population under some sort of heat advisory and driving temperatures to as high as 115F (46C) in parts of the Great Plains. Hundreds of heat records <a href="#">have tumbled</a>, from Boston, Massachusetts, <a href="#">which hit 100F (37C)</a>, to Portland, Oregon, which <a href="#">reached 102F (38.9C) on Tuesday</a>.</p> <p>But global heating may plunge many places in the US into the sort of heat extremes previously considered unthinkable, shifting their climates long-term into conditions now common in places far farther south, or even far overseas.</p> <p><a href="#">An analysis of temperature trends by Climate Central</a> found that summer temperatures in 2100 for many cities will be more like conditions farther south, 437 miles to the south on average, with Washington DC having summers more like Austin, Texas; Boston becoming more like Philadelphia; and Billings, Montana, resembling El Paso, Texas.</p> <p>Some US cities could be shifted to the sort of climates now experienced by cities in other countries, such as Los Angeles becoming more like Tuxpan in Mexico. A select few may go on an epic climatic journey by the end of the century, with Austin's summers becoming like present-day Dubai, Phoenix resembling Saudi Arabia and Las Vegas getting similar to Kuwait.</p> <p>"The real risks will be in heatwaves that are now occasional extremes that will start lasting longer," said Peter Girard, a spokesperson for Climate Central, a research organization made up of climate scientists and science communicators. "These sort of heatwaves will become normal and the dangers will be far more present. There will be people who have never needed air conditioning who will face this. It can quickly go from uncomfortable to dangerous."</p> <p>Researchers gathered temperature data from 1990 to 2020 to establish today's "normal" temperature and looked at 20 different projections of temperatures this century under different climate change scenarios. They decided to compare the status quo to a scenario where planet-heating emissions are not radically reduced and the global average temperature rises by about 3.6C by the end of the century.</p> <p>Some US cities could be shifted to the sort of climates now experienced by cities in other countries, such as Los Angeles becoming more like Tuxpan in Mexico. A select few may go on an epic climatic journey by the end of the century, with Austin's summers becoming like present-day Dubai, Phoenix resembling Saudi Arabia and Las Vegas getting similar to Kuwait.</p> <p>"The real risks will be in heatwaves that are now occasional extremes that will start lasting longer," said Peter Girard, a spokesperson for Climate Central, a research organization made up of climate scientists and science communicators. "These sort of heatwaves will become normal and the dangers will be far more present. There will be people who have never needed air conditioning who will face this. It can quickly go from uncomfortable to dangerous."</p>

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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 China rocket debris in Malaysia, Indonesia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/chinese-china-rocket-re-entry-suspected-space-debris-lands-malaysia-indonesia">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/chinese-china-rocket-re-entry-suspected-space-debris-lands-malaysia-indonesia</a>
GIST	<p>Debris suspected to be from a Chinese booster rocket that made an <a href="#">uncontrolled return to Earth on Saturday</a> has reportedly been found metres from villages in Malaysia and Indonesia.</p> <p>A charred ring of metal about five metres in diameter was found on Sunday in Kalimantan, Indonesia, according to a Malaysian <a href="#">news outlet</a>. Jonathan McDowell, an astrophysicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, said the metal appeared to be the exact size of the Chinese rocket's core stage.</p> <p>"It looks like the end cap of a rocket stage propellant tank," he said. "There's no doubt in my mind that it's from the rocket ... it's in the right place at the right time and looks like it is from the right kind of rocket."</p> <p>The uncrewed Long March 5B rocket carried the second of three modules to complete the Tiangong space station. Earlier in the week, <a href="#">China</a> said it would closely track the debris and that it posed little risk.</p> <p>But Aerospace Corp, a government-funded nonprofit research centre near Los Angeles, said <a href="#">allowing the rocket's entire core stage to return to Earth</a> uncontrolled was reckless.</p> <p>On Saturday the Nasa administrator, <a href="#">Bill Nelson, also chided</a> China for not sharing information on the rocket's descent, labelling it irresponsible and risky. "All spacefaring nations should follow established best practices, and do their part to share this type of information in advance to allow reliable predictions of potential debris impact risk, especially for heavy-lift vehicles like the Long March 5B, which carry a significant risk of loss of life and property."</p> <p>The warning came two years after fragments of a Chinese Long March 5B damaged several buildings in Ivory Coast. There were no injuries reported.</p> <p>On Sunday, local media reports said two families were evacuated from their homes in Sarawak, <a href="#">Malaysia</a> due to radioactivity concerns after a piece of debris suspected to be from the Tiangong rocket was found nearby.</p> <p>The <a href="#">report showed a piece of metal</a> wedged half a metre in the ground. Malaysia's space agency and atomic energy licensing board were <a href="#">investigating the incident</a> alongside local police.</p>

McDowell said it was difficult to tell from the quality of the photo whether the image was of debris from the rocket, but he was confident that several parts landed near the [Indonesia](#) and Malaysian border given there had been numerous local media reports of people finding suspicious metal objects.

The discovery was made one day after people in Sarawak posted images of [debris lighting up the night sky](#) as it re-entered Earth's atmosphere. "At first we thought it was a shooting star," said Aizul Sidek, who captured footage with his smartphone in Kuching, Sarawak.

Another resident [told local media](#) he was caught by surprise at about 12.40am by a thunderous noise and a tremor that shook his house.

McDowell said most spacefaring nations designed rockets to avoid uncontrolled re-entry. There was no international law requiring this, he said, but avoiding the risk became an imperative after chunks of Nasa's Skylab space station fell from orbit in 1979 and landed in outback Australia.

He said that of the six biggest uncontrolled re-entries of the space age, three were recent Chinese rockets.

"It really shows you that they stand out as different from what other countries are doing nowadays ... we realised in the 70s that letting 20-30 tonne things [re-enter uncontrolled] was a bad idea.

"In the 60 years of the space age there has been damage from rockets but no actual casualties. We want to keep it that way," McDowell said. "China is becoming one of the leading space powers and so we have to find a way to bring them into the family of space nations and hopefully encourage them to adopt these norms."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Undelivered packages, mail North Sound?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/state-representatives-demand-answers-after-widespread-reports-postal-delays/ESFPHGZP4VH3PF2W33S7RSIX7Y/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/state-representatives-demand-answers-after-widespread-reports-postal-delays/ESFPHGZP4VH3PF2W33S7RSIX7Y/</a>
GIST	<p>With election day Tuesday, widespread reports of postal delays around northwest Washington have prompted state representatives Suzan DelBene and Rick Larsen to call for the USPS to address the mail failures.</p> <p>Pictures recently posted to social media show hundreds of packages stacked up and uncovered behind the Ferndale post office.</p> <p>According to a joint media release from DelBene and Larsen, they have received more than 170 complaints from Lynden residents and additional complaints in Whatcom, Snohomish and Island counties about delayed mail and packages containing medication, bills and passports.</p> <p>People in Everett have raised concern they have not been receiving daily mail deliveries for weeks, and people in Ferndale haven't received mail deliveries for over a week.</p> <p>The complaints also address hours-long waits at post offices, undelivered mail and election ballots not delivered or picked up.</p> <p>"When our constituents have asked USPS about the delayed mail delivery, they've been repeatedly told that USPS is experiencing severe staffing shortages," the release said. "We've heard that the one-year retention rate for USPS employees for our region may be as low as 34 percent. While we understand that the entire country is grappling with workforce shortages, we believe there are steps USPS can take in the short-term to boost hiring, training, and retention. We deeply appreciate and commend the great work of the USPS employees who are working tirelessly amid these challenging conditions and urge the agency to do more to support these workers."</p>

	<p>Delays in election ballots are a concern to the representatives, as election day is Tuesday.</p> <p><a href="#">In a letter to USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy</a>, DelBene and Larsen asked the USPS to detail the steps the USPS is taking to address the delivery and return of election mail in the state.</p> <p>They also asked what the USPS were taking to address staffing shortages and whether Congress could provide help.</p> <p>Nick Martin, communications director for Congresswoman DelBene, said USPS had received the letter and are monitoring the situation. A formal response from the USPS is expected.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Unsolved Indigenous murders</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/community/facing-race/cold-case-unit-unsolved-indigenous-murders-washington-state-attorney-general-bob-ferguson/281-225b08dc-b9f9-43bf-b34a-207fa01a6541">https://www.king5.com/article/news/community/facing-race/cold-case-unit-unsolved-indigenous-murders-washington-state-attorney-general-bob-ferguson/281-225b08dc-b9f9-43bf-b34a-207fa01a6541</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Native Americans are murdered, sexually assaulted and become the victims of violent crime at higher rates than the national average, according to the <a href="#">Bureau of Indian Affairs</a>.</p> <p>In an effort to combat the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people in Washington, a <a href="#">legislative task force</a> has an ambitious plan.</p> <p>Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson is asking state leaders for funding to start a cold case unit focusing on unsolved murders of Indigenous people.</p> <p>According to the latest data available, the city of Seattle leads the nation in the number of murdered and missing Indigenous women and people (MMIWP) cases. Washington has the second highest number of cases of any state in the country.</p> <p>“We have too many cold cases of missing and murdered Indigenous girls in this state and we need the establishment, within the [Attorney General’s] office, to address these cold cases,” said Abigail Echohawk with Washington State MMIWP Task Force. “As a result of the institutional and structural racism in law enforcement, our people were not seeing investigations and our loved ones were dying in silence.”</p> <p>According to the data presented by the task force, of the 2,268 recorded unsolved homicides in Washington, nearly 5% involve an Indigenous victim. Yet Indigenous people make up less than 2% of the state population.</p> <p>The Attorney General's office has so far been able to identify 113 unsolved murders involving Indigenous people and they want funding to re-open those cases.</p> <p>“There's nobody that thinks that's the full scope of the problem. It's likely much larger than that. But we're aware of 113, so we're going to start there,” said Bob Ferguson, Washington State Attorney General. “[We’re] putting those 113 cases in front of the community and the state and saying we need resources to find them or find out what happened to them.”</p> <p><b>Families hope for answers</b></p> <p>In 2017, the remains of Jessica Santos, 23, were found on the Port Gamble S’Klallam Reservation. Santos was missing for seven days before she was found.</p> <p>“She was loving and caring, she was funny...just a beautiful all-around young lady,” said Barbara Santos, Jessica’s aunt.</p> <p>Jessica’s family says they still don’t know who killed her.</p>

	<p>“It's still an open case... so it's just frustrating for me,” said Santos.</p> <p>Recently the MMIWP task force was able to get legislation passed to establish a Missing Indigenous Person Alert system, also known as MIPA. It's similar to a "Silver Alert" which is primarily used to help locate senior citizens with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or other mental disabilities. While the MIPA system is something Jessica's family believes could've helped save her life, they say they are hopeful a cold case unit could help find her killer.</p> <p>“Just help the families,” said Santos.</p>
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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Man stormed Capitol w/gun sentenced 7yrs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/rochester/ap-online/2022/08/01/man-who-stormed-capitol-with-gun-gets-87-months-in-prison">https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/rochester/ap-online/2022/08/01/man-who-stormed-capitol-with-gun-gets-87-months-in-prison</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — A Texas man convicted of storming the U.S. Capitol with a holstered handgun, helmet and body armor was sentenced Monday to more than seven years in prison, the longest sentence imposed so far among hundreds of Capitol riot cases.</p> <p>Prosecutors said Guy Reffitt told fellow members of the Texas Three Percenters militia group that he planned to drag House Speaker Nancy Pelosi out of the Capitol building by her ankles, “with her head hitting every step on the way down,” according to a court filing.</p> <p>Reffitt's prison sentence — seven years and three months — is two years more than the previous longest prison sentence for a Capitol riot defendant. But it's less than half the length of the 15-year prison term requested by a federal prosecutor, who called Reffitt a domestic terrorist and said he wanted to physically remove and replace members of Congress.</p> <p>Reffitt was the first person to go on trial for the Jan. 6, 2021, attack, in which supporters of then-President Donald Trump halted the joint session of Congress for certifying Joe Biden's 2020 electoral victory.</p> <p>U.S. District Judge Dabney Friedrich, who presided over Reffitt's jury trial, also sentenced him to three years of supervised release after his prison term and ordered him to pay \$2,000 in restitution.</p> <p>Sentencing guidelines calculated by the judge called for a term of imprisonment ranging from seven years and three months to nine years.</p> <p>Friedrich rejected prosecutors' contention that an “upward departure for terrorism” — leading to a far longer sentence — was warranted in Reffitt's case. It was the first time that prosecutors have requested that sentencing enhancement for a Jan. 6 case.</p> <p>“He wanted to physically and literally remove Congress,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Nestler told the judge. “We do believe that he is a domestic terrorist.”</p> <p>Friedrich, however, questioned why Reffitt would merit the terrorism enhancement when many other rioters engaged in violence and made similarly disturbing threats.</p> <p>The longest sentence before Reffitt's was five years and three months, for two men who pleaded guilty to assaulting police officers at the Capitol.</p> <p>Reffitt, who already has been jailed for approximately 19 months, initially balked at speaking to the judge during Monday's hearing. But he changed his mind during a lunch break and offered an expletive-laden</p>



apology to police officers, lawmakers and congressional staffers who were at the Capitol on Jan. 6. Calling himself “an idiot,” Reffitt struggled to explain why he stormed the Capitol.

“It was a big blur,” he said. “It was just very chaotic and confusing.”

Friedrich questioned the sincerity of Reffitt's apology and expressions of remorse, noting that he has been publishing statements from jail in which he portrays himself and other rioters as patriots who were justifiably rebelling against a tyrannical U.S. government.

“Not only are they not patriots, they are direct threats to our democracy and will be punished as such,” the judge said.

Reffitt suggested that his fiery rhetoric from prison was hyperbole necessary to raise money to support his family.

“I'm on the street if I don't say something that would garner money for them,” he said.

Defense attorney Clinton Broden asked for Reffitt to be sentenced to no more than two years in prison. Broden noted that Reffitt didn't assault any law enforcement officers or enter the Capitol building.

Videos captured the confrontation between outnumbered Capitol police officers and a mob of people, including Reffitt, who approached them on the west side of the Capitol.

Reffitt was armed with a Smith & Wesson pistol in a holster on his waist, carrying zip-tie handcuffs and wearing body armor and a helmet equipped with a video camera when he advanced on the officers, according to prosecutors. He retreated after an officer pepper sprayed him in the face, but he waved on other rioters who ultimately breached the building, prosecutors said.

Reffitt didn't testify at his trial before jurors convicted him in March of all five counts in his indictment. The jury found him guilty of obstructing Congress' joint session, of interfering with police officers outside the Capitol and of threatening his two teenage children if they reported him to law enforcement.

Reffitt's 19-year-old son, Jackson, testified that his father told him and his sister, then 16, that they would be traitors if they reported him to authorities and warned them that “traitors get shot.”

Guy Reffitt was a member of the Texas Three Percenters militia group, according to prosecutors. The Three Percenters movement refers to the myth that only 3% of Americans fought in the Revolutionary War against the British.

Reffitt lived with his wife and children in Wylie, Texas, a Dallas suburb. He drove to Washington, D.C., with Rocky Hardie, a fellow member of the militia group.

Hardie testified that both of them were armed with holstered handguns when they attended Trump's “Stop the Steal” rally before the riot. Hardie also said Reffitt gave him two pairs of zip-tie cuffs in case they needed to detain anybody.

More than 840 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the riot. Over 340 of them have pleaded guilty, mostly to misdemeanors. More than 220 have been sentenced, with nearly half of them receiving terms of imprisonment. Approximately 150 others have trial dates stretching into 2023.

Reffitt is one of seven Capitol riot defendants to get a jury trial so far. Jurors have unanimously convicted all seven of them on all counts in their respective indictments.

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HEADLINE	08/02 Uvalde rekindles school officers' fears
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/uvalde-rekindles-school-police-officers-looming-fears/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/uvalde-rekindles-school-police-officers-looming-fears/</a>

AURORA, Colo. (AP) — Tony Ramaeker averages around 14,000 steps a day as he walks around the Nebraska high school where he is assigned to work as a sheriff's deputy, greeting students arriving in the morning, wandering the hallways to talk to them and watching out for those who might be eating alone in the cafeteria.

The former Marine and longtime youth pastor keeps his office in suburban Omaha stocked with treats such as Little Debbie snacks and Pop-Tarts because eating helps kids in crisis calm down and talk.

But in the back of his mind, a thought always looms: What would he do if a gunman attacked the school?

The latest reminder of that danger came in May when 19 children and two teachers were killed in a fourth-grade classroom in Uvalde, Texas. The fear that the next shooting could happen in their hallways hangs over school resource officers across the United States, exacerbating an already difficult job: They're called on to be battle-ready officers whom parents and students can trust to protect them.

Yet school police officers have been criticized for their treatment of students of color. Black students, especially, are often disproportionately arrested or disciplined when a school has armed police, critics say. And students of color report feeling less safe around police than white students.

Officers say they're acutely aware of the criticism, striving to build relationships with students and interact for more reasons than just discipline. They stress that officers who work in schools need to be specifically trained to work with children and teens. Gone are the days when it was enough to hire an officer near or in retirement and keep a police car parked outside a school. School officers are now asked to be counselors and teachers, working empathetically and diplomatically with students and administrators, while also being an armed guardian.

Ramaeker, who practices mixed martial arts, said he believes he wouldn't hesitate to do whatever he could to protect his students and staff. He has even thought through how he would use the handgun he has holstered to his hip if he didn't have time get a rifle he has kept secured in the building since the 2018 Parkland school shooting. He believes officers need to decide what they would do before a shooting happens to be mentally prepared and avoid indecision.

"If someone comes in to try to hurt a part of my family, whether it's my blood family or my school family, there is no hesitation," he said.

Reminders of the threat of school shootings were omnipresent at a recent National Association of School Resource Officers conference in Colorado where hundreds of officers gathered for training.

An exhibit hall featured booths with businesses selling ideas to stop the next school shooter, like door locks, and simulation machines to mimic shootings. One business showed off foldable assault rifles it said one school resource officer takes in a Hello Kitty backpack to his school in Alabama.

"Mom and Dad don't want to see this weapon in their school, but it's got to be there," said Dan Pose, CEO of Gulf Coast Tactical, which sells the rifles.

Officers also sat in on sessions to learn about what went right and wrong at past school shootings. In one of those, they heard about the failure by a school safety monitor to send out an alert when he initially spotted the Parkland school shooter walking onto the campus. The armed school resource officer accused of hiding during the shooting was later charged with being criminally negligent.

In another, they got a briefing on a 2019 school shooting in Colorado, in which a private security guard who was secretly armed accidentally wounded two students.

A Colorado county sheriff also pointed to a more subtle failure in the response to that fatal 2019 shooting: Officers unnecessarily traumatized evacuated elementary students by having them line up with their hands on their heads even though authorities knew the gunmen involved were either teens or adults.

“That right there will last a lifetime,” Douglas County Sheriff Tony Spurlock said, pointing to the photo of the children, one of whom has her hands folded in prayer instead. Later, he explained that he wanted to encourage school resource officers to use their discretion and find ways to minimize trauma to children.

Officer Roy Mitchell Jr. said he tries not to let preparing for a shooting rule his thoughts, but he watches out at entrances and windows for anyone unfamiliar headed into the suburban Baltimore high school where he works. He also considers where he would try to move students to should there be an attack.

“I try to always have some type of a game plan in my head,” he said.

Mitchell, Ramaeker and other officers in Denver for the conference stressed that building relationships and getting to know what’s going on in the lives of students is vital for all aspects of the job — whether they’re acting as confidants or cops.

Some offer to help make waffles and pancakes in cooking class or fill-in to serve lunch when cafeteria workers are out sick. Others squeeze into desks in the back row to observe what students are learning. They’re encouraged to teach a class, on topics such as citizens’ civil rights and the legal process. They keep an eye out for who drives what cars, who is dating whom and who might be eating lunch in the bathroom because they have no friends.

It’s an intense version of community policing that they hope will make them positive role models while also helping them learn about any kinds of threats that emerge in their schools.

Lt. Sandra F. Calloway-Crim, who has been a school resource officer in Valley, Alabama, for 18 years, said she got a call late one night after patrol officers found a 13-year-old student at one of her schools wandering outside alone in his pajamas. She knew the boy’s father would be working the night shift but that his mother would be at home, and directed the officers to take the boy there.

Still, some activists say police don’t belong in a school at all. Some districts got rid of police officers in schools during the protests over racial injustice following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 amid criticism that they have disproportionately arrested Black students, sweeping them into the criminal justice system.

Officers from Fremont, California, were removed from schools but brought back a year later after negotiating terms of a new agreement with officials. They spoke at the recent conference, encouraging supervisors to keep track of all the positive interactions they have with students to help balance the reports about investigations and arrests that police normally only document.

Don Bridges, who started a school resource officer program in suburban Baltimore in 1989, bristles at the “school to prison pipeline” criticism. Bridges, who is Black, saw the program as a way to build relationships between students and law enforcement after seeing too many people who looked like him getting arrested when he worked in patrol. He said having police in schools does not lead to Black students being targeted when officers are properly trained.

Detective Beth Sanborn drops what she is doing at home and heads into work whenever her phone explodes with messages from students at the campus where she works in suburban Philadelphia about a social media post seen as threatening.

She feels guilty sometimes for putting the needs of her “school kids” ahead of her own children. Emotional crises, fights and the fallout from failed relationships tend to be more at the front of her mind than the possibility of a shooting but she said building relationships with her students is the key to preventing all kinds of problems.

	<p>“While it always has the potential to be there, what we hope is that by stressing that sense of community, that we can avert any kind of violence,” she said.</p> <p>After Parkland’s school resource officer failed to intervene when a student opened fire in 2018, students at a high school in Cullman, Alabama, asked Officer Seth Sullivan if he would promise to protect them.</p> <p>“You’re damn skippy I’m going to be in there. Those are my kids,” Sullivan said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Guilty plea: masquerading as federal agent</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/us/secret-service-impersonators-guilty.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/us/secret-service-impersonators-guilty.html</a>
GIST	<p>One of two men accused of masquerading as federal agents in a multiyear scheme has pleaded guilty to federal charges, admitting that he duped Secret Service agents and others in Washington to secure leases to apartments that he never paid for and promote his bogus security company, the Justice Department <a href="#">said</a> on Monday.</p> <p>The man, Arian Taherzadeh, 40, of Washington, pleaded guilty on July 20 in U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia to one count of federal conspiracy, one count of unlawful possession of a large-capacity ammunition device and one count of voyeurism, the Justice Department said. The latter charge is related to his unauthorized recording of women having sex in his apartment, federal prosecutors said.</p> <p>A sentencing date has not been set. The Justice Department said that Mr. Taherzadeh has agreed to cooperate with the government’s investigation. He faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on the conspiracy charge.</p> <p>The guilty plea came nearly four months after Mr. Taherzadeh and another Washington man, Haider Ali, 35, were <a href="#">charged with impersonating</a> United States officers in a case that appeared to expose shortcomings within the Secret Service, the agency charged with protecting the president and the president’s family. Four members of the agency, which did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment on Monday, have been placed on administrative leave while the case is investigated.</p> <p>From December 2018 to April 2022, Mr. Taherzadeh “falsely assumed and pretended to be officers or employees” of several government agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, federal prosecutors said.</p> <p>He recruited people to his security company, United States Special Police, under the guise that it was a “covert federal law enforcement task force,” prosecutors said. He then defrauded three apartment complex owners in Washington by saying he needed their units for supposed operations, prosecutors said.</p> <p>While the apartments lost more than \$800,000 in unpaid rent combined, Mr. Taherzadeh ingratiated himself with at least three Secret Service officers — buying them gifts, such as a drone, a doomsday survival pack and, more luxuriously, several rent-free apartments including a penthouse for a year, prosecutors said. He had also offered to buy a \$2,000 assault rifle for an agent assigned to Jill Biden’s protective detail, according to an affidavit.</p> <p>Michelle Peterson, a federal public defender who is representing Mr. Taherzadeh, declined to comment on Monday. The Department of Homeland Security referred questions to the Secret Service. The Justice Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.</p> <p>It is unclear exactly how the men financed their impersonation scheme. <a href="#">Court records</a> state that Mr. Ali had helped fund United States Special Police and other general expenses by paying with large amounts of cash that he carried. But prosecutors did not specify how Mr. Ali had obtained his money.</p>

Mr. Ali told witnesses that he had connections to the Inter-Services Intelligence in Pakistan — a claim that the Pakistani Embassy denied and described in April as “totally fallacious.” Mr. Ali also held several visas that had been issued by Pakistan and Iran, prosecutors said.

Mr. Ali had also made other eccentric claims about his background, prosecutors said: That he had participated in the capture of Joaquín Guzmán Loera, the drug lord known as El Chapo; that his family was Middle-Eastern royalty; and that he was a Calvin Klein model.

Mr. Taherzadeh similarly made up his back story to agents, prosecutors said, telling them that he had been an Army Ranger, a special agent with the Department of Homeland Security, a U.S. air marshal and an undercover officer who had once killed someone in a shootout.

When apartment complex workers confronted Mr. Taherzadeh, Mr. Ali and an unidentified person about their failure to pay rent, the men would blame it on issues with a fictitious management at United States Special Police and a slow-moving federal bureaucracy, prosecutors said. In his unpaid apartment, Mr. Taherzadeh installed surveillance cameras to record women having sex and kept an unlicensed gun that was fully loaded with large-capacity ammunition, prosecutors said.

In one apartment named The Crossing, Mr. Taherzadeh and Mr. Ali used their personas as law enforcement officials to obtain parking spots for themselves and Secret Service members, prosecutors said.

One apartment, The Sonnet, eventually evicted Mr. Taherzadeh for not paying rent.

The recruitment efforts of Mr. Taherzadeh and Mr. Ali for United States Special Police largely hinged on their portrayal as federal officers, prosecutors said. In one instance, Mr. Taherzadeh instructed a recruit to conduct weapons-handling drills. In another, he showed a separate recruit a fake Homeland Security investigative file labeled “confidential.”

And much of their impersonation scheme, prosecutors said, was rooted in attention to details: They had a machine to create and program “personal identification verification” cards; a black S.U.V. with police lights in it; scores of guns; law enforcement tactical gear; clothing with police badges; a fingerprinting kit; and equipment used to breach doors. The authorities also found about 30 hard drives, hard drive copying equipment and other surveillance gear.

The investigation into Mr. Taherzadeh and Mr. Ali began after a letter carrier with the United States Postal Service was assaulted in March at an apartment complex where the men had been living. A U.S. postal inspector went to the complex to interview witnesses, including the two men.

The men told the inspector that they were investigators with the U.S. Special Police Investigation Unit, according to the affidavit. They said they were part of an undercover investigation into gang-related activity as well as an inquiry into the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The inspector reported the information to the Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General, which referred the case to the F.B.I.

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HEADLINE	08/01 Deadly summer: Tacoma homicides up 50%
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/tacoma-homicides-up-more-than-50-over-same-period-in-2021">https://www.q13fox.com/news/tacoma-homicides-up-more-than-50-over-same-period-in-2021</a>
GIST	<p><b>TACOMA, Wash.</b> - With a rise in shootings and other crimes, it's turning out to be a deadly summer for the City of Tacoma. The number of homicides has jumped more than 50% over the same time period last year.</p> <p>The <a href="#">police chief's new plan</a> was only announced in July, and there has already been more policing and patrols in crime ‘hotspot’ areas—but there's still a long way to go to combat crime in Tacoma.</p>

"Crime in the area has definitely increased, you know, 100% to 1,000%," said Robert Clark, a longtime Tacoma resident.

Robert has lived in the Tacoma area for much of his life. He said he's seen the violent crime increasing, with some of his friends heavily [impacted in South Tacoma](#).

"I have a friend who lives on 13th and G, and in the last two weeks, there have been two people killed there," said Clark. "One person was [killed by gunshots](#), one person was run over while inside their tent, and I'm not sure if that was an accident or if it was on purpose."

Tacoma Police say department stats show that year to date, there were 16 homicides reported in 2021. This year, there have already been 27 reported.

"As of this weekend, for the year 2022, our homicide stats are at 27 for last year at this same date," said Shelbie Boyd with the Tacoma Police Department. "So, August 1st, 2021, we were at 16."

Police Chief Avery Moore recently rolled out his crime-prevention plan in July. Part of the plan involved cracking down on a small percentage of repeat and violent offenders. Through research, criminologists also identified 24 violent addresses that caused 12% of street crimes in the city. That included murders, robberies and aggravated assaults. Officers are now conducting hot spot patrols in the neighborhoods of the identified violent addresses.

"We are going to weed out the people who need to be weeded out," said Moore during the announcement. Boyd said the department is still waiting to see if the stats show if the new policing plan has had an impact or not, but she said early indications are that community policing has helped officers to get to violent crime calls much faster.

"I do know in that in reading our shift recaps, there are now times where those police officers out doing that community-oriented type policing, and being in specific areas at certain times of the day, that there's actually officers very close by to some of these situations. So, what I see is that offers a victim an officer there much quicker than if that wasn't taking place," said Shelbie.

City council members shared concerns during Moore's announcement about the possibility of hotspot patrolling leading to questionable tactics like over-policing, stop-and-frisk measures, racial stereotyping, or discretionary practices of officers. Moore asserted his plan does not allow for that.

Boyd said a multi-prong approach to combating increases in crime will likely play a role in bringing numbers down. That includes:

- More community policing
- Giving officers the opportunity to interact in their communities
- Hiring more officers to fill those roles

At last count, she said the department was looking to hire around 40 positions.

"We are catching up. We are hiring as many as we can, as quick as we can," said Boyd. "We are looking at our training programs and trying to adapt it to a more adult-learning style, and the police academy has been working with us and trying to get as many into classes as we can get in."

Robert attributes the increases in crime to a spike in drug use and trafficking, and feels that getting drugs off the streets is part of the answer.

"You have to go in, and you have to do it right away, that's what I would say and that's what I would do," said Robert.



	"It's not just a crime problem as it relates to the police," said Shelbie. "There are drugs, mental health, and a lot of systems that are struggling right now, and everybody has to come together to try to figure this out."
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Bellevue: thieves targeting pedestrians</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/thieves-targeting-pedestrians-jewelry-bellevue/281-01649aa3-1ebe-4042-8ebb-7e1e38bf003f?ref=exit-recirc">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/thieves-targeting-pedestrians-jewelry-bellevue/281-01649aa3-1ebe-4042-8ebb-7e1e38bf003f?ref=exit-recirc</a>
GIST	<p>BELLEVUE, Wash. — A crime that's been reported in California has made its way to Western Washington. So far, police say there have been six cases of thieves stealing jewelry off pedestrians.</p> <p>"The variations in the vehicles, slight variations in the descriptions of the suspects, different ages of the kids that were with them tell us that this was a group and it's an organized, well-rehearsed tactic," said Bellevue Police Captain Joe Nault.</p> <p>The suspects are believed to be part of an organized crime ring operating along the west coast.</p> <p>Bellevue Police say the crime happens while the suspects create a chaotic interaction. The suspects who have been described as a man, woman and a child pull up in a car and start a conversation with a pedestrian. The conversation often includes a language barrier or a thick accent, which is difficult to understand. The suspects will use hand gestures and move closer to the victim. In some cases, they hand the victim fake jewelry or money. All of this is happening as they make physical contact and take a person's valuables.</p> <p>"Two of the instances have involved Rolex watches worth several thousand dollars. The most recent one we had is very sad because it was a \$6,000 necklace but apart from the monetary value, the necklace was given to the women by her recently deceased husband," said Nault.</p> <p>Nault said out of the six cases reported this year, four have been in Bellevue, one in Kirkland and one on the Kitsap Peninsula. In four of the cases, the victims are in their 70s and don't speak English, which added to the confusion.</p> <p>"A lot of things are happening at once, sort of a stimulus overload and then next thing you know their necklace or watch has been removed from them" said Nault.</p> <p>The crime is hard to track because police believe the thieves use different rental cars and are often on the move. Nault said BPD has heard similar reports of this crime happening in San Diego.</p> <p>"If you chose to wear jewelry, or nice things just be mindful of the distance you have with that person, what's actually happening and don't be afraid of maintaining distance by waking away or keeping some distance from that person. Also, don't be afraid to call 911," said Nault.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 More Seattle Center assaults on women</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/woman-recounts-seattle-center-assault-more-people-come-forward/281-0e0e427c-d15e-4699-838e-80733b1f72b9">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/woman-recounts-seattle-center-assault-more-people-come-forward/281-0e0e427c-d15e-4699-838e-80733b1f72b9</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle police say the man suspected of assaulting and exposing himself to multiple women near <a href="#">Seattle Center</a> was arrested Monday for an alleged hate crime with a felony-level assault.</p> <p>The 35-year-old suspect, who has not been charged, was booked into King County Jail.</p> <p>Police said the investigation continues.</p> <p>It's been two weeks since a Seattle woman told KING 5 she was followed by a man just steps away from the loading dock at Climate Pledge Arena.</p>

What began as a normal walk with Laura Van Burkleo's three Boston terriers, turned into a fight for her life.

"I actually did change my route that night. I normally take a right and around the block, but it was a nice night and I had my three dogs," Van Burkleo said.

Van Burkleo said it began outside Climate Pledge Arena,

"A security guard was actually talking to me and trying to say hi to the dogs and all of a sudden I saw this man coming up 1st Avenue North," she explained.

Van Burkleo said the man aggressively approached her and she tried to get away from him, telling him to stop following her.

"That's when he started calling me a neo-Nazi, homophobic slurs, telling me that I should not be living anymore and that's when he first started hitting me in the face," Van Burkleo said.

She was able to escape but he continued to follow her and went to grab her hearing service dog, Zoe. She picked up all three of her dogs, but that's when Van Burkleo said he began punching her over and over.

It was a moment she thought could be her last.

"It was terrifying, I was terrified, I really thought I was going to die right there on that sidewalk and I felt so humiliated and embarrassed because I wanted to defend myself," Van Burkleo said.

Van Burkleo said a man on a moped distracted her attacker enough that she was able to get away. She said she's most disappointed with that security guard she was talking to when this assault began.

"All while a security guard had been following us the entire time and not once did he intervene or call 911," said Laura.

Climate Pledge Arena sent KING 5 this statement:

"We are aware of an incident which happened in the Uptown neighborhood on the evening of July 18th. An off-duty security guard witnessed the aftermath of the incident and intervened.

The Climate Pledge Arena team, including our security officers, works closely with the rest of our community as we all try to achieve a safe Uptown neighborhood."

SPD previously said a half dozen women have reported being assaulted by the man.

"It was the first time being in Seattle that as a lesbian married woman that I felt that I was directly targeted based off of my sexuality," said Van Burkleo.

Van Burkleo and her wife Jennifer moved to Seattle five years ago from Oklahoma, and said this is the first time they've considered moving.

"What he did to me alone and the amount of threats of murdering me, he's going to end up murdering or sexually assaulting a woman," Van Burkleo said.

Since Van Burkleo was assaulted, other women have come forward, saying the same man attacked them.

#### **More victims come forward**

Allison Lizotte said the suspect assaulted her last Thursday while she was taking the Metro bus to Third and Pike. She said she was bit and punched by him and still, days later, has bruises and cuts.

	<p>"If this is a continuous pattern of behavior, it's getting worse. This person needs to be stopped, he needs to be put away, he needs help," Lizotte said.</p> <p>The King County Sheriff's Office and Metro are investigating this assault.</p> <p>The sheriff's office said it's too early to link this man to the one who was allegedly harassing and assaulting women in Uptown.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 NC: 3 deputies shot, standoff suspect dead</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/north-carolina-shooting-leaves-3-deputies-injured-suspect-dead-after-nearly-9-hour-standoff">https://www.foxnews.com/us/north-carolina-shooting-leaves-3-deputies-injured-suspect-dead-after-nearly-9-hour-standoff</a>
GIST	<p>Three <a href="#">North Carolina</a> deputies were shot Monday morning as they attempted to deliver paperwork, the Wayne County Sheriff's Office said.</p> <p>The deputies had arrived at a home in Dudley to serve involuntary commitment papers when the suspect opened fire, beginning an hours-long standoff. The shooting took place at around 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Authorities confirmed at a news conference that the suspect, identified as Jourdan Hamilton, had been found dead inside the home from an "apparent fatal self-inflicted gunshot wound." The body was discovered when SWAT team members entered the home after a nearly 9-hour standoff.</p> <p>Hamilton had barricaded himself inside the home. He was the only person inside.</p> <p>Wayne County Public Information Officer Joel Gillie said Monday night that Sgt. Matthew Fishman was in critical condition. Cpl. Andrew Cox and deputy Alexander Ramon Torres were in stable condition.</p> <p>"Nobody expects to go into work and be shot at, but this is what our men and women do on a daily basis. It's unfortunate that this one turned out this way," Gillie said.</p> <p>A reporter asked Gillie about <a href="#">law enforcement's</a> communication with the suspect during the standoff.</p> <p>"I can't release much of that, we did have SWAT teams on scene that were attempting to make contact with the individual," he said. "And so, you know, we had reason to believe that he was still inside at the time, that's why we were out here as long as we were, and then once we had information that suggested otherwise is when they decided to approach the home a little bit closer."</p> <p>Gillie did not say who submitted the involuntary commitment order.</p> <p>Hamilton <a href="#">had received misdemeanors</a> for communicating threats in 2021 and resisting an officer in 2019, North Carolina Department of Public Safety records revealed, according to Fox 8.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/02 Emerging crime capitals of America</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/emerging-crime-capitals-america-these-cities-have-highest-murders-per-capita">https://www.foxnews.com/us/emerging-crime-capitals-america-these-cities-have-highest-murders-per-capita</a>
GIST	<p>There are certain U.S. cities that have consistently battled <a href="#">violent crime</a> — particularly homicide — throughout the past three decades: Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, even New York City.</p> <p>Violent crime stories out of these <a href="#">beloved American cities</a> frequently make news headlines due to local and national concern for their residents and the tourists who frequent these historic areas.</p> <p>But perhaps more light needs to be shed on other cities in the South and Midwest that make national headlines less frequently than the aforementioned cities but have higher or comparable murder numbers</p>

per capita (or 100,000 residents), including New Orleans and Birmingham, Alabama; as well as Milwaukee; St. Louis; Cleveland; Rochester, New York; and Atlanta.

A compilation of June police data from cities with populations greater than 200,000 by AH Analytics co-founder Jeff Asher lists the top 31 U.S. cities with the highest murder rates, in order, so far in 2022.

On Asher's list, New Orleans has a murder rate of 36.8 per capita so far this year, followed by Baltimore at a rate of 29.1; Birmingham at a rate of 29.1, St. Louis at a rate of 27.8, Milwaukee at a rate of 19, Cleveland at a rate of 16.9, Rochester at a rate of 16.6, Philadelphia at a rate of 15.1, Atlanta at a rate of 14.9, and Kansas City, Missouri at a rate of 14.6. These numbers only reflect murder numbers halfway through 2022 and are subject to change.

"I think ... you can see a trend in increased violence across our country as a whole," Alabama [Fraternal Order of Police](#) (FOP) President Everett Johnson told Fox News Digital. "...Birmingham, just based off the per capita [murders], I think that falls in line with what's going on with the rest of our country ... for the past two or three years."

In 2021, more than a dozen cities reported [record homicide numbers](#), following a trend of violence that began in 2020.

For example, New Orleans recorded 145 murders as of June 30, putting it on pace for nearly 300 murders this year, which would put the city's homicide rate at 74.12 per 100,000 population by the end of the year. That rate would dwarf Chicago's 18.26 murders per 100,000 population, even though the Windy City [recorded more murders in 2021](#) than it had in a quarter-century.

New Orleans would also rank 9th in homicides among major cities in the world that are not at war, according to 2018 data compiled by the Citizen Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, a Mexico City-based advocacy group. New Orleans saw murders rise from 119 in 2019 to 201 in 2020. That number continued to climb in 2021, reaching 218, an 83% increase over 2019 numbers.

"I can't speak for the country, but people in Louisiana certainly know it's one of the...most dangerous cities," Darrell Basco, president of the Louisiana FOP, said, adding that what they see on the news and "experience personally" when they visit the city has made Louisianans aware of the violence in New Orleans.

The Big Easy attracts "a lot of tourists" to Louisiana year-round, Basco said, adding that city council members and other elected officials need to partner with community organizations to get a handle on violence before it impacts tourism revenue.

Basco blamed part of the issue in both Louisiana cities on a "progressive-leaning" district attorney, difficulty attracting and retaining police officers, and "the demonization of police officers" — a trend that other major U.S. cities are also grappling with since 2020.

Five miles north of New Orleans in Birmingham, Alabama, police have recorded 74 murders so far this year as of July 26, according to the Birmingham Police Department, putting the city's murder rate at about 35 per capita for the city of more than 210,000.

"Based on my knowledge of Birmingham and similar cities, they have a very lenient bond process and pretty much a signature bond that let[s] you back out regardless of the crime. When violent offenders aren't locked away, violence increases," Everett Johnson, president of the Alabama FOP said. "...I think it's a lenient bond system and a lenient criminal justice system. We currently in Alabama have a 'good time' law that allows offenders back on the street for serving so many days for good behavior, but I think that law is...being perverted."

He also believes there is a cultural lack of "respect for human dignity and human life" in cities like Birmingham with high murder rates. There is also "a drug culture" of Birmingham residents trying to compete with one another that leads to violent crime, he explained.

St. Louis is also high on the list of the most murders-per-capita in the country, but homicide trends have decreased so far in 2022 by 15% since 2021. St. Louis ranked No. 1 in murders per capita [in 2020](#).

Aside from the decreasing homicides, aggravated assaults including firearms and other dangerous weapons, robberies and larcenies are also down as of this month, according to St. Louis government officials.

"One of the major spikes in non-violent crime not only locally but nationally has to deal with larcenies, many of them involving vehicles," St. Louis Police Department Lt. Schellman said in a July 6 statement. "Larcenies in St. Louis County are down 7% overall. Much of this credit goes to the hardworking individuals of the St. Louis County Police Department. Our department is over 1,200 men and women, many working behind the scenes to keep our community safe."

St. Louis County Executive Sam Page, Ph.D., attributed the success so far this year to police funding, saying in a July 6 statement that the county spends about \$166 million per year on policing, which represents 48% of the general fund budget.

"This allows our department to offer highly specialized services that smaller communities cannot match," Page said. "This includes the Bureau of Crimes Against Property, Bureau of Crimes Against Persons, Commercial Vehicle Unit, Highway Safety Unit, Metro Air Support Unit, Tactical Operations, and the K9 Unit."

Memphis, which did not appear on Asher's list, has also taken a turn for the better after ranking fourth for the most murders per capita in 2020.

Memphis has recorded a 16% decrease in homicides and a 20% decrease in total violent crime incidents, including aggravated assault, though auto theft, theft from auto and shoplifting incidents are happening more frequently, [WREG](#) reported earlier this month. The outlet attributed decreasing violent crime to an initiative to bring retired police officers back into the force.

"We're a little bit behind where we were last year, thank goodness, but one homicide is too many," Scott DeLaSchmit, president of the Tennessee FOP, said.

"Memphis is an interesting city," he continued. "The most of the crime happens in certain zip codes, which are the lower-economic zip codes. ... But they don't have too much crime in the tourist areas. It's mainly in the lower-economic neighborhoods. And a lot of times it's crime with people that know each other, domestics, things like that. It's not just this unique city. It's what happens in other parts of the country."

While Jackson, Mississippi, did not appear on Asher's list (it has an estimated population of less than 200,000), the city recorded about 153 homicides in 2021, pegging the homicide rate at 99.5 per 100,000 residents. So far this year, the city has recorded 70 homicides, putting it on track to reach a similar murder rate by the end of 2022, according to [WLBT](#).

Nearly all of the top 10 cities on Asher's list, aside from Memphis, are led by Democratic politicians. They also suffer from some of the highest poverty and/or inequality rates in the country, according to 2020 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, led by Cleveland, Detroit, Rochester and other major U.S. cities with high crime rates.

Thirty years ago in 1991, Washington, D.C., had the highest murder rate in the nation but ranked No. 7 overall in terms of total violent crime, according to a [Washington Post article](#) from that year, citing FBI data.

	Atlanta, New Orleans, Detroit and St. Louis also made the top five list of cities with the highest murder rates in 1991, the Post reported. Miami ranked No. 1 for total violent crime. Baltimore and Chicago began appearing at the top of the list for most homicides per capita in the early 2000s into the mid-2010s.
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HEADLINE	<b>07/31 Arrest: armed man targeted Iran dissident?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/31/nyregion/iran-masih-alinejad-rifle-arrest.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/31/nyregion/iran-masih-alinejad-rifle-arrest.html</a>
GIST	<p>A man was arrested on Friday after he was found with a loaded AK-47 assault rifle outside the Brooklyn home of an Iranian American journalist who was the target of an international kidnapping plot said to be orchestrated by an Iranian intelligence network last year, according to the journalist, a court document and a person briefed on the matter.</p> <p>The journalist, Masih Alinejad, 45, has been outspoken in her criticism of the Iranian government, writing two years ago that Iranian officials had unleashed a social media campaign that called for her abduction. In a federal indictment unsealed a year ago in Manhattan, four Iranians were charged with conspiring to kidnap her and forcibly return her to Iran.</p> <p>In the new case, law enforcement observed a man, Khalid Mehdiyev, behaving suspiciously near Ms. Alinejad's home over two days last week, according to a criminal complaint filed in Federal District Court in Manhattan on Friday.</p> <p>On Thursday morning, the complaint said, Mr. Mehdiyev arrived outside her home in a gray Subaru Forester SUV with an Illinois license plate and remained in the vicinity for several hours. During that time, he ordered food to be delivered to the car, approached the residence, appeared to try to peer inside the windows and attempted to open the front door, the complaint said.</p> <p>That afternoon, he left and was stopped by New York City police officers after failing to obey a stop sign. He was arrested after the police determined that he was driving without a license and that his license had been suspended, the complaint said.</p> <p>The police found a suitcase on the rear seat of the car, containing the AK-47 with an obliterated serial number, the complaint said. The rifle was loaded with a round in the chamber and a magazine attached, along with a second, separate magazine and about 66 rounds of ammunition. The rifle had markings showing it was made by Norinco, a Chinese state-owned manufacturer of firearms and military supplies.</p> <p>The complaint does not identify Ms. Alinejad, an American citizen, but she said in a phone interview on Sunday that she was told by the authorities that the man in question was outside her house. She also said she had home security footage showing him outside her front door.</p> <p>"I came here in America to be safe," she said. "First, they were trying to kidnap me. And now I see a man with a loaded gun trying to enter my house. I mean, it's shocking."</p> <p>Ms. Alinejad said she and her family have since moved to a safe location.</p> <p>Mr. Mehdiyev, who was charged with one count of possessing a firearm with an obliterated serial number, was ordered detained without bond by a federal magistrate judge. Mr. Mehdiyev's lawyer, Stephanie Carvlin, declined to comment. The U.S. attorney's office also declined to comment.</p> <p>The indictment made public in July 2021 in the kidnapping plot said that an Iranian official and a network of intelligence operatives used private investigators to surveil, photograph and video-record Ms. Alinejad and members of her household. The surveillance included a live, high-definition video feed showing her house, the prosecutors said.</p> <p>Audrey Strauss, the U.S. attorney in Manhattan at the time, said then that an American citizen living in the United States "must be able to advocate for human rights without being targeted by foreign intelligence operatives."</p>



Ms. Alinejad, in an interview last year with The New York Times, said she had been shocked when she learned the full details of the alleged Iranian kidnapping plot.

“That shows that they’re not scared of America — they’re scared of me,” she said then. “Otherwise, they would not send anyone here to kidnap me.”

The complaint filed against Mr. Mehdiyev, which was signed by an F.B.I. special agent, said that inside the suitcase, the authorities also found \$1,100 in \$100 bills, two license plates from other states with different numbers and a New York State learner's permit listing an address in Yonkers as Mr. Mehdiyev's residence.

The complaint said that at a Brooklyn police precinct where Mr. Mehdiyev was taken, he waived his Miranda rights and told agents he was in Brooklyn looking for a new apartment because his rent was too high, according to the complaint.

He said he had attempted to open the outer door of the residence in order to knock on the inner door and ask if the occupants would rent him a room, but he changed his mind because he thought someone might be sleeping, the complaint said.

Without being asked about the AK-47 found in the car, he volunteered that he did not know anything about a gun and claimed the suitcase was not his, the complaint said.

Later, Mr. Mehdiyev asked to speak again with the agents. He said that the AK-47 was his and that he was in Brooklyn because he was looking for someone. He then asked for a lawyer and declined to speak further, the complaint said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 Philippines won't rejoin international court</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/marcos-jr-philippines-rejoin-international-court-87749743">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/marcos-jr-philippines-rejoin-international-court-87749743</a>
GIST	<p>MANILA, Philippines -- Newly elected President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday the Philippines has no plan to rejoin the International Criminal Court, a decision that supports his predecessor's stance but rejects the wishes of human rights activists.</p> <p>Former President Rodrigo Duterte withdrew the Philippines from The Hague-based court in 2019 in a move rights activists said was an attempt to evade accountability and prevent an international probe into thousands of killings in his campaign against illegal drugs.</p> <p>“The Philippines has no intention of rejoining the ICC,” Marcos Jr. said in response to a question at a news conference.</p> <p>Marcos Jr., who took office on June 30, said he recently met his justice secretary and other legal advisers to discuss the possible resumption of an ICC investigation into the drug killings.</p> <p>Judges at the ICC in September authorized Prosecutor Karim Khan to investigate killings during Duterte's crackdown from Nov. 1, 2011, to March 16, 2019.</p> <p>The probe, however, was suspended in November after the Philippines said in a letter to Khan that it was already investigating the allegations so the international court did not have jurisdiction.</p> <p>“We are saying there is already an investigation here and the investigation is continuing. Why will there be such?” Marcos Jr. said, questioning the possible resumption of the ICC probe.</p> <p>The ICC is a court of last resort for cases that countries are unwilling or unable to prosecute. Under the court's rules, a country can request deferral of an investigation if it is already investigating on its own.</p>

	<p>Khan, however, has sought to resume his probe, saying in June that “I have concluded that the deferral requested by the Philippines is not warranted, and that the investigation should resume as quickly as possible.”</p> <p>More than 6,000 mostly poor drug suspects were killed in Duterte’s police-enforced crackdown, based on police statistics. Human rights groups say the death toll is considerably higher and should include many unsolved killings by motorcycle-riding gunmen who may have been deployed by police.</p> <p>Duterte has defended the crackdown as “lawfully directed against drug lords and pushers who have for many years destroyed the present generation, especially the youth.” He has denied condoning extrajudicial killings of drug suspects, although he has openly threatened suspects with death and has ordered police to shoot suspects who dangerously resist arrest.</p> <p>Marcos Jr. has faced calls to prosecute Duterte over the drug deaths but has instead praised his predecessor in recent speeches.</p> <p>His vice president, Sara Duterte, is the former president's daughter and helped with Marcos Jr.'s election victory in May.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/01 DC police: 6 shot, 1 killed</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/shot-killed-dc-shooting-police/story?id=87775602">https://abcnews.go.com/US/shot-killed-dc-shooting-police/story?id=87775602</a>
GIST	<p>Six men were shot and one was killed in a <a href="#">shooting</a> in northeast D.C. on Monday, police said.</p> <p>"We appear to have a large group of people who were in the area when the shots rang out," Metropolitan Police Department Chief Robert Contee told reporters, adding, "We have no idea why the shots were fired at this point."</p> <p>Police said it's still unclear if the victims knew each other, or if this shooting is related to any other incidents in the city. However, Contee did say the "common denominator" is "illegal firearms in the hands of people who shouldn't have them and when disputes get resolved as a result of a gun being used."</p> <p>The ATF Washington Field Division was on the scene assisting police in the ongoing investigation. According to the D.C. Police Union, this is the sixth mass shooting in the city in 2022.</p> <p>When asked about the community's frustration with violent crime, Contee told reporters he's also frustrated. "I'm angered and I'm sad. I'm angered at the fact that residents had to experience this in their community tonight. The residents didn't deserve this," he said. "They did not deserve to have people shot in the communities where they live. I'm saddened because I know of all of the investments that the city has made in violence interruption efforts."</p> <p>"We have people who are in our communities who just have lost their sense of humanity. And that really saddens me," Contee added.</p> <p>Within the last three weeks, D.C police, council members and other local officials met specifically about the apartment building where Monday's shooting occurred.</p>
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